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China

CHINA TOURISM

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TRACING THE RUINS OF THE GREAT WALL

THE MOTHERS' FESTIVAL IN TUNBAO

262
ISSN 1025-577X
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龍鳳呈祥　雙喜臨門

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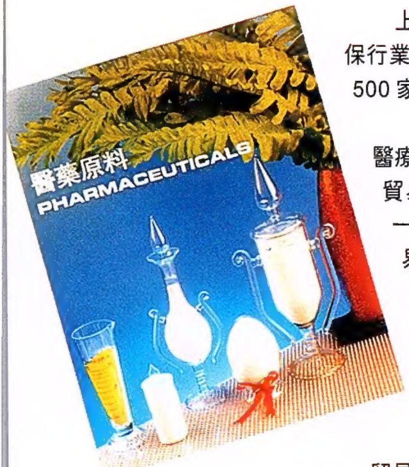
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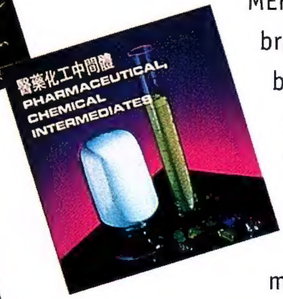
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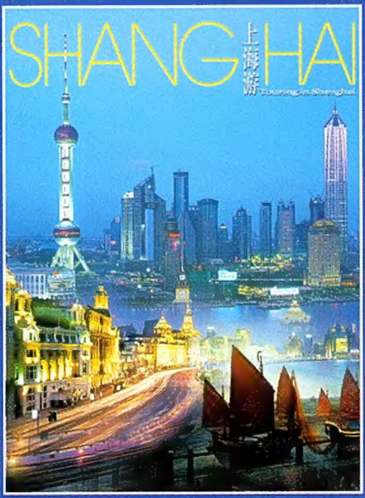
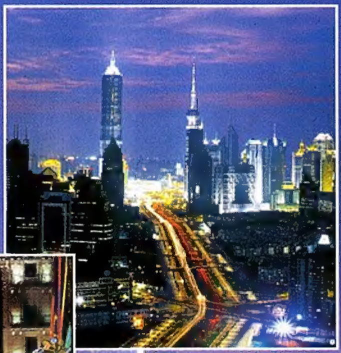


Shanghai has evolved at an unprecedented speed for decades into the biggest commercial city in China and one of the great metropolises of the world. Favourably located at the mouth of the Yangtse River, Shanghai has a long history and a rich culture. Commercial tower blocks and traditional buildings exude their individual charms simultaneously in the Pudong District, where hundreds of buildings in different styles, old or new, are collectively known as the Exposition of World Architecture. A kaleidoscope of entertainments and festivals of Old Shanghai attracts scores of entrepreneurs and travellers alike. "Touring in Shanghai" takes you deeper into this vibrant city through spectacular photography, along with outlines for more than 10 different kinds of tours including a shopping tour, popular tourist sights, cultural excursions, and more. Practical information summarises accommodations, transport and dining options, and tourist maps are also included. "Touring in Shanghai" is the latest, most comprehensive travel pictorial of Shanghai available in Hong Kong.



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14 Mount Changbai: Three Perspectives

Photos by Shi Yongting, Wang Miao, Lang Qi, Wen Bo
Article by Chu Kit

These famous mountains near the Korean border offer all sorts of natural attractions — waterfalls, pristine lakes, hot springs, flora and fauna, and a valley of oddly-shaped volcanic rocks, to name but a few. With approaches on the western, southern and northern slopes, visitors have many options for climbing the mountains to pass through the Silver Birch and Alpine Tundra Belts, admire the Changbai Waterfall or look for the "monster" in the Heavenly Pond. For some reason, nature's beauty seems enhanced in this special region. Our correspondent and team of photographers travelled there to remind us why this is so.

Discoveries

36 Great Wall Fortresses in Shanxi and Inner Mongolia

Photos & article by Li Youxiang

Our reporter, accompanied by a young graduate keenly interested in studies of the Great Wall, travels from Datong to former battlegrounds and fortresses — some with villages bustling around them or houses built flush with part of the ancient wall itself, some entirely ruined and abandoned, some intact but empty of life — and learns a bit about China's military history.

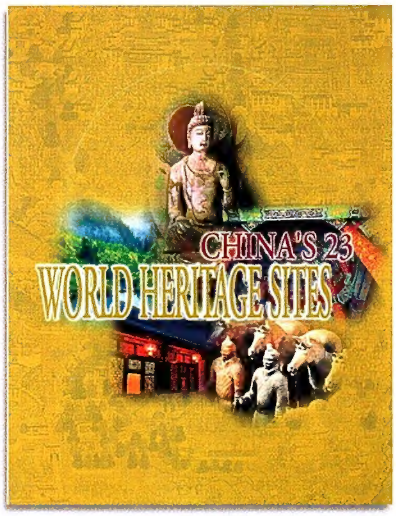
On the Way

46 Driving a Car to Visit Yinchuan

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong

The freedom of being behind the wheel and designing your own itinerary comes with a price, especially if you do not otherwise drive very often. Nevertheless, our intrepid journalist does just that to fulfil his poem-inspired quest to see the Helan Mountains in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. En route, he visits the Xia Mausoleum where Li Yuanhao, founding emperor of the Western Xia Kingdom, is buried, and the Zhengtian Tower, and also meets writer Zhang Xianliang at his famous film studio.

China's 23 World Heritage Sites



Today, more than 580 cultural and natural sites have been placed on UNESCO's World Heritage list. China, one of the world's four ancient civilisations, also has its share of these heritage sites. Up to 1999, 23 sites in the country have been honourably put on the list. These include the Mountain Resort in Chengde, the Temple of Heaven, the Ruins of Zhoukoudian, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the ancient city of Pingyao, Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum in Xi'an, Wulingyuan, Huanglong, Jiuzhaigou, Mount Emei, the ancient town of Lijiang, Potala Palace, Mount Wudang, Mount Taishan, Confucius' Temple, Mansion and Cemetery in Qufu, Suzhou Gardens, Mount Huangshan, Mount Lushan, Mount Wuyi and Dazu Rock Carvings.

In this book, *China's 23 World Heritage Sites*, you can delight in the beauty of each one of these sites. Incredibly gorgeous pictures together with a practical travel guide add to the book's comprehensive nature and make it a great gift for you and your friends.

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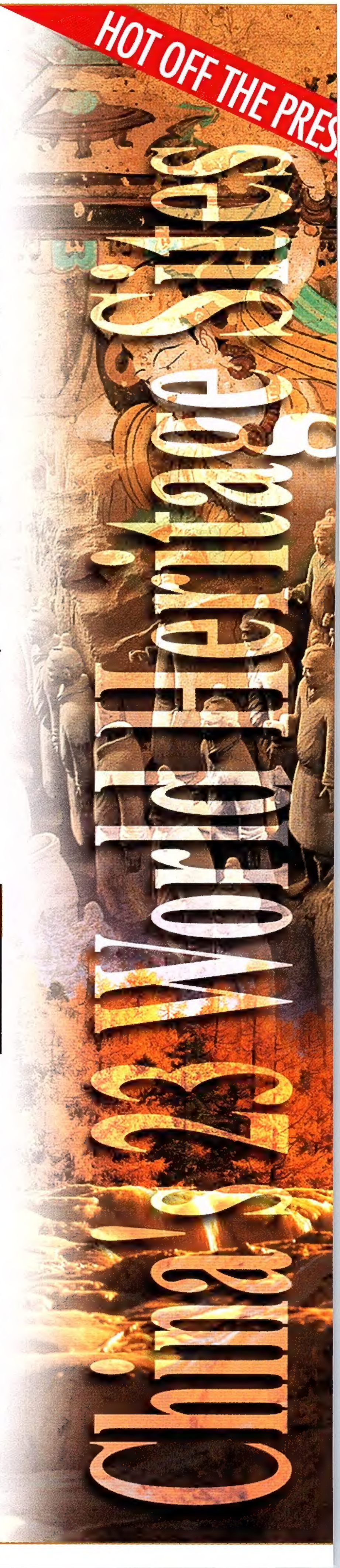

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FROM THE EDITOR

A Natural Gift

Lush green valleys, rusty autumn leaves, limpid blue lakes — some descriptions of nature's beauty have become cliche, however accurate their original aim. These days we can read extensively about nature and admire it in lifelike paintings. In our clothing, on walls, tinting dishes, books, hair, computer screens...all around us, we see every imaginable colour, each of which had its origins in the extract of some plant. Brilliant photographs capture segments of the great outdoors for us in neatly cropped squares. Still, to fully experience the multi-faceted masterpiece that is nature, nothing quite compares to being in it.

Our May issue presents several journeys designed to lure you past the frame into landscapes as diverse as the famed Changbai Mountain region in southeastern Jilin Province, the pleasing countryside patchwork of two farming townships in northeastern Yunnan Province, and the remains of the Great Wall fortresses in and around Datong in Shanxi Province and Inner Mongolia. Aside from Mother Nature, other articles focus on a tribute to mothers held every dozen years by the Tunbao people of western Guizhou and an elderly woman who steadfastly clings to her lifelong home.

A rainbow, a sunset, a smile...nature's gifts can be fleeting, but they are rich reward for our patience and respect.

Photo by Shi Yongting

Peony Blossoms Lure Travellers to Luoyang, Henan

Luoyang in Central China's Henan Province is not only a city rich in cultural relics but also famed for its gorgeous peony flowers since ancient times. The city holds its Peony Fair every spring when the flowers are in full bloom. This year's fair, the 20th of its kind in Luoyang, falls between April 10 and 25. Various economic and cultural activities will accompany the flower admiration.

With a history going back 5,000 years, Luoyang was the capital of several dynasties in ancient China. Its moderate climate and soil are perfect for peonies, which produce large blossoms. As well as having developed more than 800 kinds of peonies, the city has been ceaselessly introducing new species from overseas. The annual Peony Fair has become a showcase of the city's cultural and economic development, attracting tourists as well as business people from home and abroad.

Border Trade to Be Stepped Up on Tumen River

Tumen River in Northeast China's Jilin Province runs along the borders between China and Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Jilin government promises to give top priority to strengthening the infrastructure in this area to expand economic, trade and tourism co-operation between the province and its neighbours.

Four billion yuan (US$481 million) will be allocated to extend railways and highways and to improve other facilities in the coming five years. The province will accelerate construction of a Sino-Russian railway and will greatly expand marine and air transportation to better link the area to the outside world. The population of Hunchun, a border city, is expected to expand from 300,000 to 500,000 by 2005. The city will focus on its export-oriented processing industry, with more local products, such as Chinese herbal medicine, organic food, mushrooms and beverages to be exported to Japan, the Republic of Korea and Southeast Asian countries. Tourism exchanges will increase as well.

Shanghai: Pudong Airport for International Flights

With the completion of all kinds of facilities at Pudong International Airport, all flights from overseas to Shanghai will eventually be transferred to the new airport. Meanwhile, the old Hongqiao Airport will continue to handle domestic flights, including those between Shanghai and Hong Kong or Macao.

Shanghai, the largest city in China, aims to make Pudong International Airport a leading Asian aviation hub by the end of 2010.

New Science Museum Opens in Shanghai

The Shanghai Science and Technology Museum was opened to the public recently. The gleaming new glass and steel structure covering 68,000 square metres cost 1.8 billion yuan (US$212 million) to build. It will serve as an important base for popular science education and a venue for leisure and tourism.

The museum presently has six exhibition halls, including the Earth's Crust Exploration, Wide Spectrum of Life, Light of Wisdom, Audio and Video Paradise, Cradle of Designers and Children's TechnoLand. Visitors can journey to a rainforest to observe its native creatures or experience the simulated but breathtaking sights and sensations of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Interactive programmes are featured in the AV Paradise and are a key component of the Light of Wisdom Hall with its nearly 100 displays demonstrating the basic principles, laws and phenomena of physics, mathematics, chemistry and biology. Children under 12 will enjoy TechnoLand which is designed for their particular interests. In the Cradle of Designers, visitors can learn about modern production lines and advanced processing techniques. They can design and make their own greeting cards, souvenir carvings or music videos as well.

New Exhibition Centre Planned in Beijing

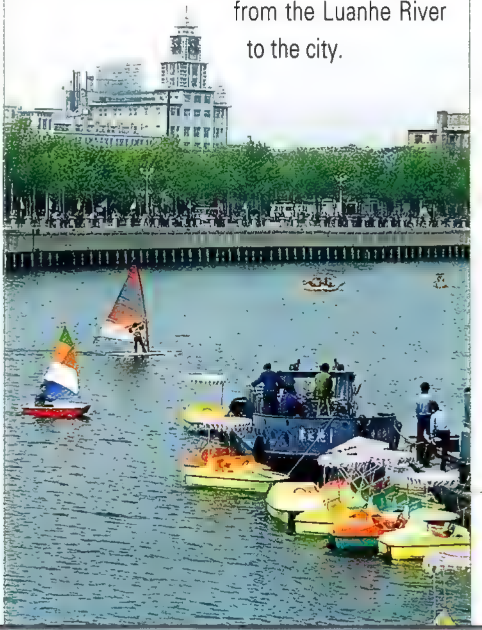
A new exhibition centre, the largest of its kind in China, will be built in the Olympic Park in Beijing. The project will be finished by 2007, one year before the 2008 Summer Olympic Games are held in the capital. The city authorities hope that the Games will create countless business opportunities and that the exhibition centre will play an important role.

The centre's size, infrastructure and high-tech facilities will be able to meet the requirements of any organisers seeking a place to present large-scale international conferences and exhibitions.

Tianjin to Treat Polluted Water Route

Tianjin is one of China's four municipalities (the other three being Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing) and one of the country's major industrial centres. Situated by the Bohai Sea, it is also the biggest seaport in northern China. The municipal government is now working on a project to protect the city's main water supply route which locals refer to as their lifeline.

The Luanhe River in northern Tianjin is the primary source for drinking water in Tianjin. The project will treat pollution in the Luanhe-Tianjin Water Route via which water is transferred from the Luanhe River to the city.



100,000 Birds Migrate to Shantou, Guangdong

More than 100,000 migratory birds now fly to Shantou, a coastal city in eastern Guangdong Province, to find their winter shelter. The city has over 66,666 hectares of forests and seaside wetlands, which cover 32.5 percent of its total territory. The per capita greenery for the city's urban dwellers has reached 5.33 square metres.

Among the migratory birds found in the mangroves are white swans, egrets and other rare species.

Three Gorges to Remain Attractive

The Three Gorges area of the Yangtse River has been a hot tourist attraction for the past few years. Some travel agencies have used the building of the big dam to boost business and, consequently, the 30 or so luxury tourist boats employed in Three Gorges tours are already fully booked up to January 2003.

However, according to the tourism authorities of Hubei Province, where a major section of the Three Gorges is located, the rising water level resulting from completion of the dam will only add to the beauty of the river, meaning there is no need for tourists to rush to the Three Gorges before the project is finished. The gorges will retain their majestic charm, while both the dam and the reservoir will become new attractions in the area. Additionally, scenic spots and cultural relics hidden in the surrounding mountains will become more accessible.

Digital Library Forum Opens in Beijing

An international forum, entitled "Digital Library and China", will be held from May 23 to 25 in the New Century Hotel in China's capital city. Beijing's proposal to build a national digital library will be the forum's focus. Meanwhile, the China International Digital Library Expo 2002 will be held at the nearby Capital Gymnasium. It is hoped that the exposition will serve as an international platform for manufacturers, suppliers and users to meet one another, exchange information, discuss co-operation and forge agreements.

ORBIS-Merrill Lynch Walk in Hong Kong

More than 2,400 people participated in the fund-raising walk this year. Participants hiked through Tai Tam Country Park on March 10, 2002, raising HK$1.8 million to help fight preventable blindness in China. Of this amount, a total of HK$700,000 was contributed by Merrill Lynch and its employees. The money will be used to pay for future visits to China's Shanxi and Fujian provinces by the ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital.

ORBIS is a nonaligned, non-profit global development organisation whose mission is to preserve and restore sight by strengthening the capacity of local partners in their efforts to prevent and treat blindness. Ophthalmic training programmes are carried out onboard the ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital, a converted DC-10 jet, and in hospitals and clinics in developing countries throughout the world. Since 1982, ORBIS has conducted over 450 programmes in more than 80 countries and has trained more than 54,000 doctors and nurses in sight-saving skills.

Wildlife Zoo to Be Built in Artificial Forest

Jilin A wildlife zoo will be built in the Jingyuetan National Forest Park, a grand artificial forest in Northeast China's Jilin Province.

The zoo, to be located in a forest valley, is designed to cover an area of two square kilometres. After completion, it will be divided, with one area expressly for vehicles and another for walking.

Huang Wenhua, director of the Jingyuetan Development Administration Committee, says that rare birds and animals such as peacocks, reindeer, rhinoceroses, camels, tigers and giraffes will be included among the wildlife. Meanwhile, kangaroos from Australia and parrots from South America, among other species, will be cared for in the public area.

Covering a total area of 200 sq km in southeastern Changchun, capital of Jilin, the Jingyuetan National Forest Park is home to a variety of medicinal herbs, rare animals and plants.

Best Presidential Suites in Regal Airport Hotel

Hong Kong In an effort to meet every conceivable need or desire of business travellers to Hong Kong, the newly opened 280-sq-m Presidential Suite on the top two floors of the Regal Airport Hotel is arguably the best of its kind.

The Presidential Suite offers a sense of space with 4-metre-high ceilings, an official reception and entry area, distinct lounge and dining areas as well as a full kitchen, and a private study. Included in the bathroom are such luxurious amenities as a sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi.

Blending meticulous artistry with a modern design concept, a variety of exceptional materials accents the stylish decor, from the white crystalised glass wall panels in the foyer to the glass-topped coffee tables encasing swirling furrows of raked sand. An "Around-the-Clock" menu is also available, allowing guests to order any meal 24 hours a day.

Directly connected to Hong Kong International Airport's passenger terminal by an enclosed, air-conditioned walkway, the Regal Airport Hotel is a world-class establishment providing superb accommodation, with 1,103 rooms and many state-of-the-art facilities. The hotel has won several awards including the Best Airport Hotel Asia Pacific 2001, Best Airport Hotel 2001, Tourism Services Award, and Wastewi$e Logo of the 2001 Hong Kong Eco-Business Awards.

For reservations, please call: (852) 2286 8888.
Website: http://RegalHotel.com

Happy Valley Second Phase Completed

Upon completion of the second phase of construction, Shenzhen's Happy Valley theme park has been further expanded. It now features eight zones, three of which are new: the Old Gold Mine, Shangri-la Dreamland and Typhoon Bay. These accompany the existing five zones of Adventure Hill, Happy Island, Maya Beach, Cartoon Town and Happy Plaza.

Opening hours: 9:30-21:00
Tickets: 90 yuan (adult); 45 yuan (elderly/ children)
Tel: 86-755-6949168 Website: http://www.oct-tour.com

First English Archaeology Journal Published

Archaeology With over 12 invited, internationally-known archaeologists serving as advisors, China's first English academic journal in the field of archaeology was published earlier this year.

The journal, *Chinese Archaeology*, sponsored by the Institute of Archaeology under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, plans to publish one volume each year. The publication focuses on introducing China's most important and most recent archaeological discoveries and research results.

A total of 44 research papers and excavation reports, along with more than 150 pictures, are included in the first volume.

According to Liu Qingzhu, director of the Institute of Archaeology and editor-in-chief of the journal, the Institute is committed to introducing Chinese archaeology to the international community, to increase the world's understanding of Chinese archaeology and to stimulate academic exchanges between China and the international archaeology community.

New Air Route Between China and Korea

China Korea In order to ease travel to South Korea for the World Cup 2002, Korean Airlines recently launched six new air routes between China and Korea:

Route	Frequency per week	Model of plane
Cheongju-Beijing	2	MD-82
Daegu-Beijing	2	MD-82
Pusan-Qingdao	3	MD-82
Incheon-Tianjin (cargo plane)	1	MD011F
Icheon-Kunming	2	B737-800
Incheon-Wuhan	2	MD-83

Hukou Waterfall Becomes National Geology Park

Shanxi A renowned natural wonder, the Hukou Waterfall of the Yellow River has recently been recognised as a National Geology Park by the National Land Resource Department.

The listed area located inside the geology park covers 45 sq km and includes the Hukou Waterfall Scenic Area, Kelan Slope Scenic Area, and Central City Scenic Area. Hukou Waterfall is a national geology park of high value as an ecosystem and for environmental, cultural and scientific research.

Watching Monkeys in Jiuzhaigou

Sichuan Soon, a new, special attraction will be introduced to Jiuzhaigou (Nine-Village Gully) visitors. Tourists will be able to fly from Guangyuan to Jiuzhaigou by helicopter and, accompanied by local guides, enter the nature reserve area to observe the wild golden-hair monkey.

One of three kinds of Chinese golden-hair monkey, the Sichuan golden-hair monkey is a precious species. Wujiao and Baihe, which are 10 km and 40 km away from Jiuzhaigou County, respectively, will also be developed into scenic areas. In the Baihe nature reserve alone, there are over 1,500 wild golden-hair monkeys.

Yunnan Airways Opens Myanmar Route

Yunnan **Myanmar** Yunnan Airways of China formally opened an international air route on April 1, 2002, linking Kunming to Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city.

General Manager of Yunnan Airways Luo Chaogeng said the air route will serve as a bridge between the peoples of China and Myanmar and will enhance the economic, trade and tourism interests of both places.

The Kunming-Mandalay air route is the first international route with regular flights to Myanmar's second largest city initiated by a foreign airline. Mandalay International Airport occupies a land area of 10,131 hectares with a runway measuring 4,200 metres in length and 60 metres in width, allowing it to accommodate large aircraft such as the Boeing 747.

Quanzhou Wins Cultural Heritage Protection Awards

Fujian Following a seven-month refurbishment completed four years ago, Zhongshan Road of Quanzhou in East China's Fujian Province has won an award for outstanding protection of cultural heritage in the Asian-Pacific region granted by UNESCO.

Built in the 1920s, Zhongshan Road is 2.5 km long. Buildings of Eastern and Western architectural styles line both sides of the street. Previously, due to a lack of attention, most of the structures had become quite dilapidated. In order to restore these buildings to their original look, the Quanzhou government embarked on a refurbishment project which lasted from March to October of 1998.

The 7th National Art Festival

Zhejiang The Seventh China Art Festival will be held in Hangzhou, capital of east China's Zhejiang Province, on October 12, 2003. Performances will also take place in Ningbo, Shaoxing, Jiaxing and Wenzhou, all located in Zhejiang.

The venue for the opening ceremony is tentatively confirmed to be the Hangzhou Theatre, construction of which began on July 1, 2001. The building of theatres in other host cities has also started. During the 12-day art gala, some 100 domestic operas, artistic performances and 10 foreign programmes will be staged, whilst exhibitions of photography, folk culture, books and archaeological items are also scheduled.

The last such event was held in Nanjing, capital of east China's Jiangsu Province in September 2000.

Natural Rock Maze Found

Guangxi A rare rock maze has recently been found in a karst landscape in Xiangzhou County of Southwest China's Guangxi Province. The place will soon be developed into a scenic spot for visitors.

Located on a rocky hill in Shalan Village, the maze resembles a European castle and occupies an area of about 50,000 sq km. The stony walls inside stand high with a surface that looks like fish scales. Up to two people can walk side by side through the wider corridors. Visitors can scarcely see the sky while treading these pathways and can easily lose the way if not mindful of the directional signs. Not far from the maze is a wood of peach and pear trees, whilst mountains and villages dot the appealing landscape. Geologists believe that the rock maze was naturally formed during the Devonian Period (350 million-0.4 billion years ago) when the karst landscape resulted from platonic movements under the ocean and prolonged erosion by water.

New Galleries in Sanxingdui Museum

Sichuan The Sanxingdui Museum in Sichuan Province will soon build galleries highlighting more than 200 exquisitely-crafted relics. Rarely seen by the public, these relics will help broaden knowledge about Sanxingdui culture.

Situated in Guanghan in Sichuan, the museum currently has 1,200 relics on display, including striking bronze scripture groupings and characteristic items of gold, ceramic and jade, all reflecting strong ancient Sichuan customs. The relics are important sources for studying civilisations along the Yangtse River.

Weifang Fuhua Fun Park

Shandong Featuring dining, accommodation, sight-seeing and shopping, the Fun Park is an all-inclusive, modern theme park in Shandong Province. Built with a 300 million yuan investment, the first phase of the park covers an area of 200,000 sq m and boasts advanced playground facilities. Thirty large-scale, motorised game machines include a space wheel, high turbo jump tower, space tour and whitewater rafting. Additionally, a Rainforest Restaurant, fast food eateries, seafood city, night clubs, wellness centres and shopping centres are on offer. For entertainment, tourists can enjoy water massage, sauna, swimming and other water activities in the Water Palace. Moreover, movies will be shown on a water curtain with castles, lakes and fountains as background. Advanced digital AV effects are dedicated to giving visitors an unforgettable experience.

Transport: 1. Fly to Qingdao or Jinan. Take a scheduled bus to Weifang. Duration: 1.5 hours. Take Bus No. 20 from the Weifang Railway Station directly to the Park. 2. Fly to Weifang. The Park is just 5 minutes away from the 14th Station of the Jinan-Qingdao Expressway.

Add: 197 Dongfeng East Street, Weifang, Shandong Province.

Tel: (86) 536-8788168/ 8788169 *(information provided by Liang Juqiao)*

Antique Structures Discovered in Xiamen

Fujian Recently, ancient buildings reflecting strong Fujian architectural styles — the Scholar Tower built in the Qing Dynasty and Jinshi House built in the Ming Dynasty — have been discovered. The discovery adds an excellent cultural scenic spot to Fujian Province.

The complex is located at 20 Lutang, Qingjiao Village, Haicang Taiwan Merchants Investment Zone, Xiamen, Fujian, and includes a Juren (title given to the outstanding candidate of an ancient public exam) Tower and three common houses. It neighbours the Qingjiao Ciji Palace, a heritage site under national protection.

The Juren Tower is a Fujian residence built by Qing tycoon Chen Zai'an in 1895. Covering 2,000 sq m, it was first called Di'e Tower. After Chen's third son won the title of Juren in the country's public examination, the building was renamed.

East of the Juren Tower are two well-preserved, genuine red-brick, ancient buildings known as the Ming Jinshi House. Three rows of tiles still remain on the roof, revealing the high social status of the previous owner. The Ming-style earthen walls, rarely seen nowadays in Fujian, are another surprise.

Flights Between Shanghai and Munich

Shanghai **Germany** A new flight from Shanghai to Munich, capital of Germany, operated by Lufthansa Airlines was launched on March 16, 2002. The route will introduce Airbus A340 — A300, with flights between the two cities taking place every Friday, easing travel to Europe for Chinese tourists.

Flavourful Dining in Chengdu

Writer: **Zhang Junmo**

Born in Guangdong Province; worked as a reporter in early years; famous for short essays; specialises in studying Chinese jade in recent years.

Chengdu has always been my base for tours to Mount Emei, Jiuzhaigou, the Yazi River in Sanxingdui, and newly-developed tourist resort Siguliang (Four Maids) Mountain in the Wolong Nature Reserve, in Sichuan Province. Each time, I would stay one or two days in Chengdu before setting off to the above places. Tired of visiting such nearby attractions as Dujiangyan, Xue Tao Well on the Jinjiang River, the Cottage of Du Fu and Wangjiang Tower, I wandered the streets and lanes of Chengdu to look for the "Guan Guan Ji" (chicken cooked in a pot), a dish I had eaten many years ago.

Chengdu locals often incorporate Mandarin into their own dialects. But their pronunciation of "Guan Guan Ji" as "Guan Guan Gai" is similar to that of Cantonese. Therefore, in addition to the mouth-watering flavour and cheap price (one yuan per small pot), I was also impressed by its name when I first tasted the dish in a tiny eatery.

Walking the streets of Chengdu before this time with some friends, delicatessen stands could be seen everywhere. Upon ordering a bowl of dog soup, one sat in front of the stand and watched the dish being made. Slices of cooked dog meat were placed in a big bowl to which boiled broth was added. Even Chinese who did not dare to eat dog were drawn to the aroma. Nowadays, street stands have become "proper" eateries located one next to another. All the chefs wear white hats and coats, giving customers a clean and tidy image, so diners are more at ease.

Tidu Street in the city centre is a famous culinary street. From day to night, the street is crowded with cars and people. Food stalls, big or small, line the street, serving numerous characteristic feasts that make one salivate. However, as travellers, how could we savour all the varieties in such a short time considering that each of us only had one mouth and one stomach? Eventually, we thought of an ingenious way to sample the food: regardless of the risk of being laughed at, all five of us entered one eatery after another along the street, sampling one or two dishes together each time.

The kind and friendly Chengdu people only responded with bemused smiles on seeing the "economic" actions of these visitors. Their business being guaranteed by local customers, they did not particularly seek the tourist dollar. In fact, when they heard us praising the food repeatedly, they gave us more for free.

A brief list of the dishes we tried that afternoon in Tidu Street includes Husband & Wife Lung Slices, knife-peeled noodles, glutinous rice flour dumplings, Old Zhang's Duck, Zhong's Dumplings and three-flavour paste; and in Dongfeng Road, pearl dumplings and yak meat. Although we only had a mouthful of each item, we all filled up ultimately.

Some time later, one winter's night, the city was enveloped in thick mist. Seen from afar, the food street with its lights of the eateries and silhouettes of the diners suggested a wonderland inhabited by immortals. For dinner, a friend who was familiar with the place took us to a famous Sichuan restaurant.

Genuine Sichuan cuisine must be salty and spicy, and is not satisfactory with just chilli. It must be mouth-numbing. The seasoning bringing out this feature is the Chinese pepper. Every local household adds a sprinkling of this when cooking. Only when the tongue feels numb and the throat is on fire can it truly be called a great enjoyment.

I thought I could withstand hot food. However, upon finishing half a bowl of Dandan noodles cooked in red chilli oil, smoke seemed to rise from my ears. But it was not cooked with Chinese peppers! Then, when I tasted the braised carp, chilli minced pork with bean curd, diced chicken with red chilli and Sichuan hotpot, which did include Chinese pepper, poor me, my throat and brain were completely numbed, while fire sparked in my eyes and mouth. As I slept that night, I had a fiery dream as well. And it was equally just as unforgettable.

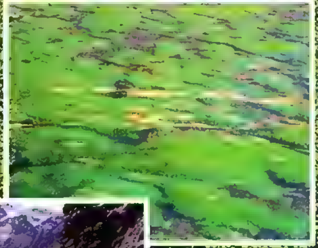
Mount Changbai:

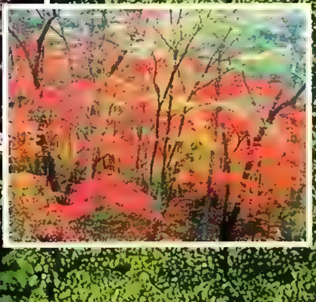
Three Perspectives

Photos by Shi Yongting,
Wang Miao, Lang Qi, Wen Bo
Article by Chu Kit

Although not a hiking enthusiast, I was amazed by my first sight of Mount Changbai and fell in love with it instantly. In 1980, Mount Changbai was listed with the Biosphere Reserve Network and was also made a World Natural Reserve by UNESCO. It boasts boundless forests, spectacular snowcapped mountains, lakes, waterfalls, hot springs and canyons. The stunning landscapes and their ever-changing colours result in any number of captivating sights. In addition to travelling along the northern route, I also explored the newly-developed western and southern routes, which gave me a three-dimensional view of Mount Changbai. For one whose sensibilities have been too long polluted by urban life, it was a cleansing, refreshing experience.

Mount Changbai is truly a fantastic place to visit.





Mount Changbai **File**

Carbonised wood — evidence of volcanic explosion

The Three Most Recent Volcanic Eruptions:

August 26, 1597 (25th year of the reign of Emperor Wanli of the Ming Dynasty 1368-1644): According to recorded accounts, "First we heard the sound of a blast. When looking up, we saw smoke rising towards the sky. Then rocks, large enough to be encircled by several men with outstretched arms, were tossed up amidst the smoke. They were hurled behind the mountain and disappeared from sight."

1668 (7th year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi of Qing Dynasty 1644-1911): A heavy rain of ash "fell in the vicinity of Mount Changbai."

April 14, 1702 (11th year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi): Historical records state, "At noon, the sky turned overcast suddenly. Sometimes, it glowed an ochre colour, like that of a flame in smoke. My room filled with a pungent smell. I felt as if I was inside an oven and the heat was unbearable. It began to abate after the fourth watch. When I went out to find out what had happened, I saw the land strewn with fallen ash, just like ash of burnt shells."

Note: Although the last eruption took place 300 years ago, hot springs can be found throughout Mount Changbai, indicating it is not extinct. A seismological observation post on the mountain closely monitors the movement of the crust of the earth. There is said to be no sign of an imminent eruption.

Position:

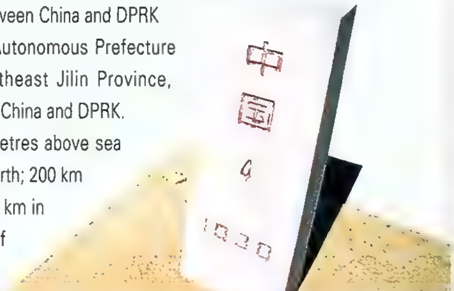
An ancient volcano in dormancy

Regarded by Jin (1115-1234) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties as the place from where the earliest Manchurian ancestors originated, and therefore deemed a sacred mountain. A grand ceremony is held annually in memory of the ancestors.

A mountainous boundary between China and DPRK

Location: Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture and the city of Baishan in Southeast Jilin Province, spanning the border area between China and DPRK.

Altitude and Area: 2,749 metres above sea level; 310 km long from south to north; 200 km wide from east to west; 60,000 sq km in total area, or 60 times the size of Hong Kong.



No.4 boundary tablet between China and D.P.R.K.

Origin of the Name:

Mount Changbai has changed names several times. In Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-256 B.C.), it was called Buxian Mountain; in Han (206 B.C-A.D. 220) and Wei (220-265) dynasties, it was Gaimada Mountain; in Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589), it was Tutai Mountain; in Tang Dynasty (618-907) it was named Taibai Mountain. It was not until Liao (907-1125) and Jin (1115-1234) dynasties that the name Mount Changbai appeared. The *History of Jiang Gang about Mount Changbai* states: "The mountain is covered with snow in winter as well as in summer, making it white all year round. Therefore, it is known as "eternal white"." But snow is not the only thing keeping the mountain white. Gray rocks leftover from volcanic eruptions are strewn across the mountain peaks and appear white from a distance.

Ecological Status:

Mount Changbai is well known for its primitive vegetation and well-preserved ecosystem. The vertical plant distribution belts are clearly visible along the rise of the mountain. Here one may fully relish the meaning of the saying, "a mountain of four seasons, a different climate every five kilometres".

600-1,100 metres above sea level: Mixed Forest of Coniferous and Broadleaf Trees

Features: As this area is not very high and its land is fertile, it is covered with thick forest. The variety and quantity of flora and fauna is greater here than in the other three vegetation belts on the mountain. Trees include Korean pine, Machurian ash, cork tree, elm, linden, etc. Wildlife encompasses tiger, red deer, roe deer, sable, black bear, Chinese wood frog, wild hog, hazel grouse, etc.

1,100-1,800 metres above sea level: Coniferous Tree Belt

Features: Often engulfed in mist, damp and cold in temperature, with a thin layer of soil, this area is most suited to trees such as dragon spruce, fir, larch, etc. Animals are also less prevalent, but include boar, black bear, badger, red deer, squirrel, sable, black woodpecker, etc.

1,800-2,100 metres above sea level: Silver Birch Belt

Features: Low temperatures, high precipitation and heavy winds mean fresh gales rage in this area for more than 200 days each year. Aside from the tenacious silver birches, no other trees are found here. As the belt is narrow and the trees scattered, it is not ideal for most animal life, though chipmunk, squirrel, pika and rosefish, etc., can be seen.

2,100-2,749 metres above sea level: Alpine Tundra Belt

Features: At this high altitude, the bitter cold and poor land permit only low-growing weeds, moss and lichen; trees cannot survive. Animals are rare, with only pika and swifts in evidence. Larger animals like black bear and red deer are seen occasionally in summer when they come up here to cool themselves.

Silver birch

Mount Changbai Nature Reserve:

Mount Changbai Nature Reserve, with a total area of 1,964.65 sq km, was established in 1960 to protect the temperate zone's ecosystem. With the Heavenly Pond at its centre, the eserve covers the northern, western and southern slopes of Mount Changbai, Antu County of Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, Wusong County and Changbai Korean Autonomous refecture of Yunjiang City. The best part of the primitive forest is within the reserve.

The routes to the top of Mount Changbai introduced here are mostly within the reserve.

Yalujiang Riverside

istorical Events Concerning the Reserve:

1960, Mount Changbai Nature Reserve was established with an emphasis on protecting the temperate zone's ecosystem.

January 1980, Mount Changbai was designated a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Program.

1986, Mount Changbai Nature Reserve was approved as a National Forest and Animal Reserve.

ote: Nineteen sites in China have been included in the International Man and Biosphere Program. Among them are Jiuzhaigou d Huanglong in Sichuan Province, Wuyi Mountain in Fujian Province, Xishuangbanna in the Miao Autonomous Region of unnan Province, Shennongjia in Hubei Province, and Fanjing Mountain in Guizhou Province.

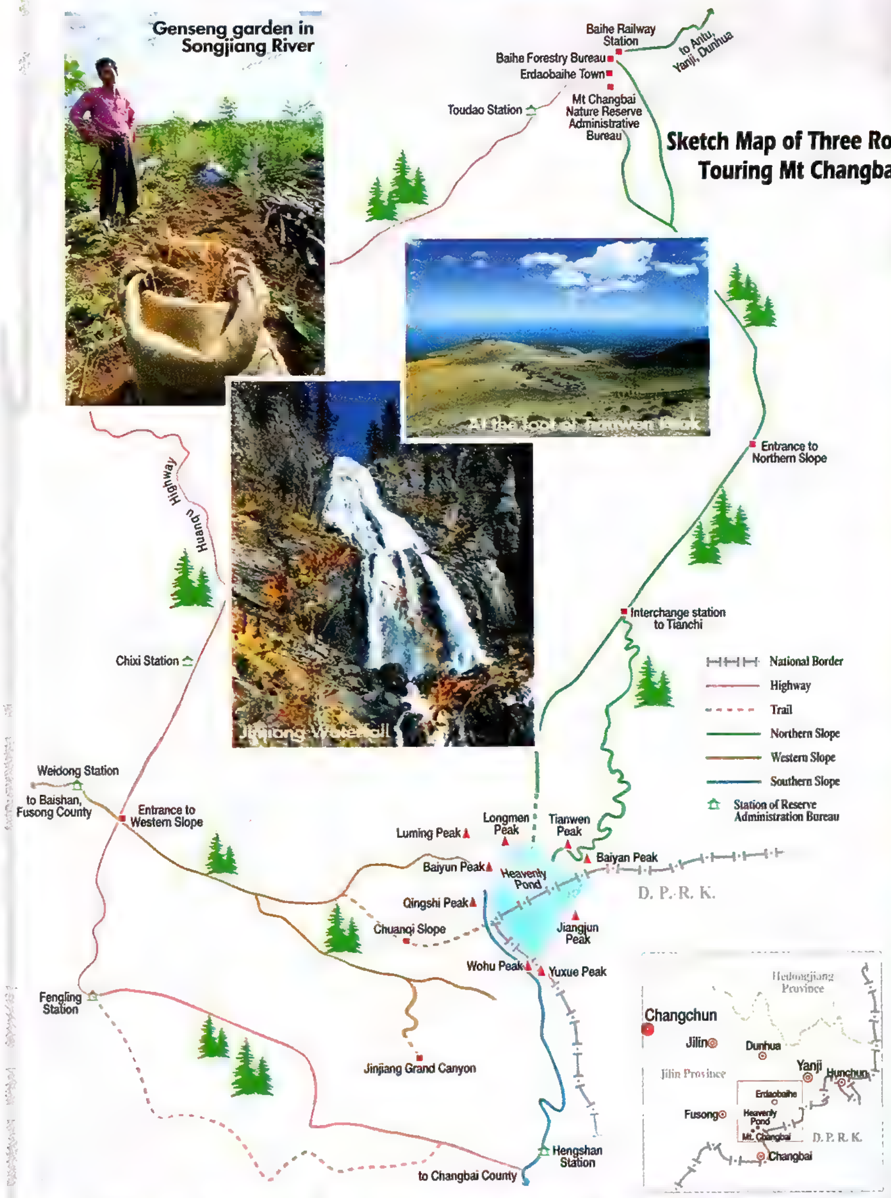
Different Ways to Ascend Mount Changbai:

There are four routes going up Mount Changbai, being the astern, southern, western and northern slopes, respectively. In this eature, we will introduce all but the eastern route which originates in he Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). In fact, the astern route is quite pleasant. A three-day tour to DPRK organised by he Changbai County Travel Service costs RMB 1,090 per person and ncludes travelling to White Head Mountain (as Mount Changbai is nown in DPRK). In the past, Hong Kong tourists could join this ackage tour. However, changes in the boundary regulations mean hat although residents of the mainland and Taiwan can still take hese tours, Hong Kong people cannot. Therefore, the eastern slope an now only be imagined by Hong Kong DIY travellers.

or Your Information: Mount Changbai and A Dream of Red Mansions

According to the research of Professor Chen Jinghe of Jilin niversity, a specialist in the study of the classic novel *A Dream of Red ansions*, a few descriptions in this novel have something to do with ount Changbai. In the very beginning of the novel, the author scribes the hero, Jia Baoyu, as the incarnation of a useless block of one from the 36,501 stones melted down by Goddess Nu Wa to air the sky. This particular block of stone was cast away at the foot the "Qinggeng Peak of Wuji Cliff in Dahuang Mountain" (the Blue dge Peak of the Baseless Cliff in the Great Waste Mountain). Based another ancient work "Da Huang Xi Jing" in Shan Hai Jing, Da ang (Great Waste Mountain) refers to Mount Changbai. Wuji Cliff aseless Cliff) is exactly the same pronunciation of "Wuji Kingdom". uji means the "Forest Tribe", an ethnic group in northeastern cient China, who are ancestors of the Manchurians. The Chinese onunciation of Qinggengfeng (Blue Ridge Peak) also means "the ot of the Qing Dynasty". The stone Jia Baoyu wears originated from e ancient Wuji of Mount Changbai, the origin of the Manchurians.

Apart from this, Professor Chen also points out that in Chapter 53 ere is a description of a ceremony held in the Ning Mansion to offer crifices to ancestors on the eve of the Chinese New Year. Bailiff Wu the manor in Black Mountain Village has arrived to pay the rent. At e same time, he has brought a number of local products as ntributions. On his list there are things like stag, deer, boar, breeds goat and sheep, sturgeon, bear's paw, pheasant, etc. Those are oducts of Mount Changbai. The contributor "has travelled in melting ow for a month and two days". Based on careful calculations, Black untain Village is situated somewhere to the north of today's Jilin y, precisely where Mount Changbai stands.

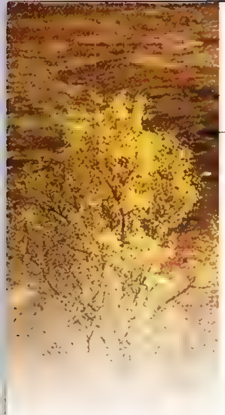

Sketch Map of Three Routes Touring Mt Changbai

Genseng garden in Songjiang River

At the foot of Tianwen Peak

Jinjiang Waterfall

Baihe Railway Station
to Antu, Yanji, Dunhua
Baihe Forestry Bureau
Erdaobaihe Town
Toudao Station
Mt Changbai Nature Reserve Administrative Bureau
Entrance to Northern Slope
Interchange station to Tianchi
Huangu Highway
Chixi Station
Weidong Station
to Baishan, Fusong County
Entrance to Western Slope
Luming Peak
Longmen Peak
Tianwen Peak
Baiyan Peak
Baiyun Peak
Heavenly Pond
D. P. R. K.
Qingshi Peak
Chuanqi Slope
Jiangjun Peak
Wohu Peak
Yuxue Peak
Fengling Station
Jinjiang Grand Canyon
Hengshan Station
to Changbai County
National Border
Highway
Trail
Northern Slope
Western Slope
Southern Slope
Station of Reserve Administration Bureau
Heilongjiang Province
Changchun
Jilin
Dunhua
Yanji
Hunchun
Jilin Province
Erdaobaihe
Fusong
Heavenly Pond
Mt. Changbai
D. P. R. K.
Changbai



Climbing Mount Changbai, Starting from The Northern Slope !

For me, "Mount Changbai" had always been synonymous with "primitive" and "wilderness" before my visit to this well-known place.

I stayed the night in the Yalin Hotel near the office of the Mount Changbai Nature Reserve Administrative Bureau and set off for the mountains by jeep the next day with a local guide. As we drove, I was astonished by what I saw. The northern side of the mountains had become a well-developed tourist route. Endless coaches, loaded with passengers, and jeeps kept passing us. The road curving up through the mountains was wide and well built. Signs denoted the various scenic spots. What surprised me most were the excellent hotels providing hot spring baths and saunas up in the mountains....

Road: Concrete **Opening Time:** All year round **Admission Fee to the Mountains:** 60 yuan

Accommodation: Available at Tianchi (the Heavenly Pond), Changbai Hot Springs, and the entrance to the Northern Slope of the mountain.

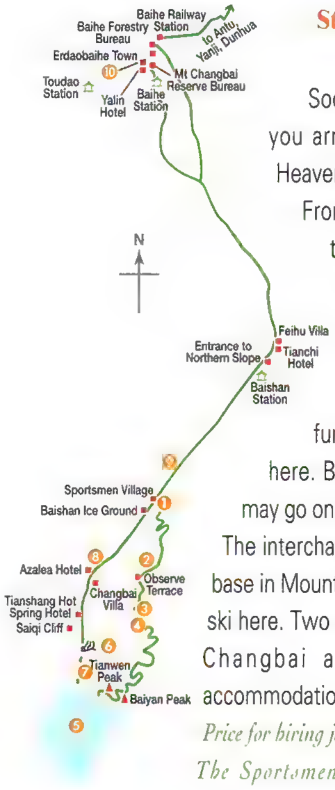
Toilet: Available at all accommodations; there is also one at the Waterfall Corridor.

Principal Scenic Spots: The Heavenly Pond, Heifengkou (Black Wind Pass), Silver Birch Belt, Alpine Tundra Belt, Changbai Waterfall, Changbai Hot Springs, Lesser Heavenly Pond, Forest in the Valley, Mount Changbai Museum of Natural History. (Rate of sight: ✿✿✿✿✿)

Tour Duration: A tour can be completed in one day, but two days are best if you have time and want to travel in a leisurely manner. Stay overnight in a hotel at the top of the mountains.

Comments: The Northern Slope Route has the most scenic spots and the most complete tourist facilities, making it the top tourist choice. Personally, I think it best suits those who seek a comfortable tour.

Most tourists choosing the Northern Slope route hire a vehicle in Erdaobaihe town at the foot of the mountains. After a half-hour drive, you reach the entrance to the Northern Slope. Upon purchasing an admission ticket (60 yuan), you may begin climbing Mount Changbai.



Stop ①: Interchange station to the Heavenly Pond

Soon after passing through the entrance, you arrive at an interchange station to the Heavenly Pond, 1,100 metres above sea level. From this point, a hairpin road leads up to the lake. Another road nearby goes on to the Changbai Waterfall, hot springs area, and the Lesser Heavenly Pond. Since the road quickly becomes steep, tourist buses cannot go any further, so tourists must change to a jeep here. But if you hire a jeep to begin with, you may go on to the Heavenly Pond without stopping. The interchange station area is also a skiing training base in Mount Changbai. If you visit in winter, you can ski here. Two hotels, the Sportsmen Village of Mount Changbai and the Azalea Hotel, provide accommodations.

Price for hiring jeep: 80 yuan per person

The Sportsmen Village of Mount Changbai and the Azalea Hotel:

Tel: (433) 5746066; Fax: (433) 5746055; Room Price: 280 yuan

Hike to the Heavenly Pond: About 90 minutes

Stop ②: A World of Elves — Silver Birch Belt

✿✿✿✿

The winding mountain road is flanked with Korean pine, Manchurian ash, cork tree, linden, elm, dragon spruce, fir and larch, to name only a few tree species. At 1,800 metres above sea level, all the trees disappear except the silver birch. Clear-cut belts of vegetation are a characteristic of plant distribution. As the climate is extremely harsh here, other trees cannot survive. Only the hardy silver birch can withstand harsh weather. The silver birches here are quite different from the same tree in other places. Blown by strong winds year round, rows upon rows of distorted tree trunks lean to one side. Layer after layer of their bark has been ripped by the wind, as if they've been assaulted and bashed all over. Yet they have a mysterious air about them, reminding one of Tree Elves in fairy tales.

Stop ③: Heifengkou — Watching the Waterfall

✿✿✿✿

Having crossed the Silver Birch Belt, Heifengkou (Black Wind Pass) comes into view. As its name suggests, it is a grotesque place situated between the end of the eastern part of Bulao Peak and the Belvedere. Here the peak seems to have been cleaved to create a narrow ravine, up from which a strong wind blows ceaselessly. The average wind speed can reach 11.7 metres per second and sometimes even 17.6 metres per second. It is about 500 metres from the bottom of the ravine to the top of the peak. Anyone looking down the ravine during a gale will shudder and go weak in the legs.

However, this is the ideal place to observe the Changbai Waterfall. Like a piece of pure white silk, it dangles amidst the mountains in the distance.

Be extremely careful at the Black Wind Pass. For more than 270 days a year, a strong gale is blowing. Also, the volcanic gravel surface is slippery; avoid the edge of the precipice. If the wind is too strong, move on to the next stop. There is so much beautiful scenery that missing one sight is not crucial.

Stop ④: A Huge Colourful Carpet — Alpine Tundra Belt

✿✿✿

The Black Wind Pass is in the Alpine Tundra Belt, the highest of the vegetation belts on Mount Changbai. As the wind is brutal here and temperatures are cold, only low shrubbery, weeds, moss and lichen thrive. In late spring and early summer, however, the undulating slope is like a large, verdant carpet. In autumn, it takes on a lovely red tinge. Don't be surprised if you feel a sudden impulse to run or roll around on it!

Previous page: The highway of the Northern Slope under construction. Now it is a new highway covered with cement. (by Shi Yongting)

1. **The Heavenly Pond was formed by the eruption of a volcano and is the highest of China's volcanic crater lakes. (by Yu Guozhi)**
2. **The verdant Lesser Heavenly Pond has a totally different, more subtle charm compared to the Heavenly Pond. (by Wang Miao)**
3. **Many Republic of Korea excursion groups come to the Changbai Mountains just for the exercise of hiking. (by Chu Kit)**
4. **Some hotels in the area of the Hot Springs are very close to the Lesser Heavenly Pond. (by Chu Kit)**

2

Stop ❺: A Blue Pearl Dropped from Heaven — the Heavenly Pond

If you drive further up, make a few turnings to reach the Tianwen Peak Car Park, more than 2,000 metres above sea level. At first all you can see is an expanse of wilderness as the foggy forest extends to the horizon. After getting off the bus, climb the 50-metre-long, steep slope to the top of Tianwen Peak from where you'll see the lake, a lustrous blue pearl dropped from Heaven.

The Heavenly Pond is 2,189.1 metres above sea level, with a circumference of 9.82 square kilometres. The catchment area is as large as 21.4 square kilometres. The average lake depth is 204 metres, the deepest part being 374 metres. Its total accumulative water volume is 2.04 billion cubic metres. All of which means it ranks first among volcanic lakes in altitude and size. It is also a boundary lake between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); the dividing line runs roughly through the lake's centre. As the source of the Yalu, Songhua and Tumen rivers as well, it is naturally of vital importance.

At the northern part of the lake, there is a breach between Tianhuo Peak and Longmen Peak, known as the Tamen Gate, the lake's only outlet. From here, lake water rushes out of a 1,250-metre-long narrow gorge and falls 68 metres down a cliff, forming the famous Changbai Waterfall.

Sixteen peaks caused by volcanic eruptions long ago surround the lake. Tianwen Peak, on the northern slope, is the best place to view the lake. Its pointy peak, which is 2,670 metres high, resembles an eagle's beak, so it is also known as Eagle Beak Peak. In 1958, an observatory, called "Tianwen Peak", was built on the peak's eastern side, hence the name. Of all the peaks, the tallest one in Chinese territory is Baiyun Peak on the Western Slope, rising 2,691 metres. But Jiangjun Peak in the territory of DPRK is 2,750 metres above sea level.

Apart from domestic tourists, most foreign tourists come from the Republic of Korea (R. O. Korea) and many flock to the lake. Mount Changbai is sacred to people of R. O. Korea. From the top of the peak they can see DPRK on the other side of the lake. An indescribable feeling must rise in them as they gaze at their divided homeland.

- *The lake is often engulfed in mist, which is rather disappointing for tourists. Therefore, the best time to visit is September when the air is crisp. When the weather is fine, it is advisable to see the lake first before visiting other scenic spots.*
- *Tianwen Peak is steep and the slope is covered with loose, slippery gravel. It is also quite windy on the mountain. Take extreme care when climbing.*

Stop ❻: A Warm Belt — Changbai Hot Springs

After clambering back down the hairpin road to the bus stop, you may take another road to the hot springs. Nine hundred metres north of the Changbai Waterfall, in an area of 1,000 square kilometres on either side of the upper reaches of the Erdaobaihe River valley, there are dozens of craters, sparkling in the sunshine and gushing hot spring water, called the Julong Hot Springs.

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Geologically speaking, natural springs are divided into two types. Those with temperatures lower than 20°C are called cold springs; those over 20°C are hot springs. There are also two types of hot springs. Those between 20-38°C are warm springs, while those over 38°C are hot springs. Some springs, in the centre part, can be as hot as 70°C. The further from the centre a spring is, the lower its temperature. However, most of the springs here are over 40°C, so they are all hot springs.

If you wish, you may snack on an egg boiled in the hot spring water. Nearby stalls sell the eggs for 10 yuan per half dozen. They are fresh and tasty. Then try a sauna and a dip in the hot spring water in an outdoor swimming pool at the Heavenly Hot Spring Hotel, a joint venture of the Mount Changbai Nature Reserve Administrative Bureau and Dong-Ah Air Cargo Service Ltd., R. O. Korea. The surroundings are picturesque and the bath is relaxing. Another good choice is the Mount Changbai Tourist Hotel, formerly the renowned Yuehua Hotel. Mr. Deng Xiaoping once stayed here in 1983. Today it is an equity joint venture between Japan and China. The classic Korean-style structure is most impressive. Both hotels are very popular with tourists.

Heavenly Hot Spring Hotel *Tel.: (433) 5746081, 5746082;*
Room Price: 400 yuan; Price for Hot Spring Water Bath: 80 yuan

Mount Changbai Tourist Hotel
Address: Erdaobaihe Town, Antu County, Jilin Province
Tel.: (433) 5746001; Room Price: 600 yuan;
Price for Hot Spring Water Bath: 80 yuan

Cuckoo Manor *Tel.: (433) 5746066; Room Price: 260 yuan;*
Price for Hot Spring Water Bath: 30 yuan

Stop ⑦: A Milky Way on Earth — the Changbai Waterfall

Having left the bus near the hot springs, you may walk along the "Waterfall Corridor". Along the route, you may see many piles of stones, similar to Mani stones in Tibet. In fact, tourists from R. O. Korea have left them, believing such stone piles will bring blessings to them. After another 15 to 20 minutes, the magnificent Changbai Waterfall, like the Milky Way fallen to earth, appears.

Changbai Waterfall plummets down for a length of 68 metres. The pool beneath the waterfall has a minimum depth of 20 metres. Once the cascading water reaches the pool, it forges onwards, forming the rolling Erdaobaihe River and becoming the main source of the Songhua River. The roaring water at close proximity sounds like thousands upon thousands of horses galloping past.

There used to be a mountain path near the waterfall which led to the Heavenly Pond, but it was very steep and dangerous. In the past, courageous men climbed up to the lake this way on all fours.

A Reminder: The Name "Erdaobaihe" Is Confusing

Erdaobaihe is a name for a zone at the foot of Mount Changbai. It is also the best place to begin your journey up the northern slope of the mountains. However, since this zone is governed by four administrative authorities, it is often called something different by various local residents. To avoid confusion, tourists should pay special attention.

This zone is under the jurisdictions of: Erdao Town of Antu County, a place featuring many hotels, restaurants, shops and a bus terminal; Baihe Forest Administrative Bureau, which looks after a large stretch of forest to the north and east of Erdao Town, with several shops and eateries; Mount Changbai Nature Reserve Administrative Bureau to the south of Erdao Town, very close to Mount Changbai Museum of Natural History and the Yalin Hotel; and finally, the Baihe Railway Station, the final stop of the Changchun train line.

Of all these places, Erdao Town is probably the best place to hire a car, find accommodation or go shopping. Second choice is the area in which the Mount Changbai Nature Reserve Administrative Bureau is situated. There is not much to see in Baihe but you have to go there since the railway station is there. If you travel to Erdaobaihe from Yanji by bus, you first pass the railway station, then the Baihe Forest Administrative Bureau to reach the Erdao Town bus terminal. Be alert for the stop you want.

1. **Winter has passed and spring has come. The Silver Birch Belt and the Alpine Tundra Belt are covered with snow and green shade. The scenery there is unique. (by Wen Bo)**
2. **Eggs cooked in the hot spring are very delicious. (by Wang Miao)**
3. **While the main volcano erupted long ago, some small craters nearby appear to be autoecious craters. The forest at the bottom of the valley is an autoecious crater. (by Shi Yongting)**

Unfortunately, it was eventually destroyed by falling rocks and landslides during downpours. Now it is being repaired and the path will be fitted with stone steps, giving tourists a choice of routes to the Heavenly Pond.

Admission Fee for Waterfall Corridor: 10 yuan

Stop ⑧: Refreshing and Quiet — the Lesser Heavenly Pond

Not far from the hot springs, under a thick growth of trees, there lies a small, pretty lake known as the Lesser Heavenly Pond. The lake is fed year round by more than a dozen brooks on the northern slope. Its perimeter measures 260 metres, its average depth is more than 10 metres, and the catchment area is 5,380 square metres. Though not as dazzling as the Heavenly Pond, it is refreshing and quiet. Some say it was a glacier lake, which evolved in the Ice Age. Others think it is a small volcanic crater. So far no conclusion has been reached. Not far to the west, there is another similarly shaped lake with a reddish-brown tinge. The two lakes resemble a pair of rings when viewed from a height, hence, they are known as the Silvery Ring Lakes.

Enter the woods by the road side, follow the road signs and you will reach the lakes in about 10 minutes.

Stop ⑨: Underground Trees — Forest at the Bottom of the Valley

Returning from the Lesser Heavenly Pond, you'll notice a mysterious forest at the bottom of a valley, five kilometres east of Mount Changbai's ski training base and north of the Cave Waterfall. For a closer look, walk along a winding wooded path, past the Longyin Pavilion to the entrance, Liang Yuan. Once through the gate, you have a panoramic view of the underground forest. This is in fact a valley with 50 to 60 metre tall cliffs on both sides. The valley is as long as 2,500 to 3,000 metres running north to south and is covered with thick, mostly coniferous trees. In the middle of the valley, ancient pine trees tower amidst huge rocks. It's all very tranquil and mystical.

Stop ⑩: Monster in the Lake — the Museum of Natural History

After descending Mount Changbai, you may wish to visit the Mount Changbai Museum of Natural History run by the Mount Changbai Nature Reserve Administrative Bureau. Located near Erdaohe Town at the foot of a neighbouring mountain, the museum houses several exhibition halls displaying various kinds of geological terrain, rare plant and animal specimens, etc., which help visitors better understand the place. Of particular interest is an exhibit about the "monster" in the Heavenly Pond. Records of witnesses claiming to have seen the monster are on display. Whether true or not, you may decide.

Admission Fee: 15 yuan

Translated by Wang Mingjie

1. **The high road around a mountain on the northern slope, traversing the Silver Birch Belt and the Alpine Tundra Belt, leads to the Heavenly Pond. (by Shi Yongting)**
2. **Tourists may visit the Mount Changbai Museum of Natural History neighbouring the Mount Changbai Nature Reserve Administrative Bureau to the myth of the monster of the Heavenly Pond. (by Chu Kit)**
3. **Basalt lava and floating rock are leftover from old volcanic eruptions. (by Wang Miao)**
4. **The lake water of the Heavenly Pond rushes out from Tamen Gate, the lake's only breach, forming a narrow gorge. It then falls 68 metres down a cliff, forming the famous Changbai Waterfall. (by Wang Miao)**

For Your Information: A Monster in the Heavenly Pond?

The story about the monster in the Heavenly Pond has been circulating for years. As early as 1903 (29th year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu of the Qing Dynasty), someone claimed to have seen a monster in the lake. In the *History of Jiang Gang about Mount Changbai*, a local witness recounts: "We went to hunt in Mount Changbai and once chased a beast to the side of the Heavenly Pond,...an animal as huge as a buffalo in the water. It's roaring was deafening. It seemed to lunge at us and we were all scared...." Ever since, more and more people have claimed to see the monster and given vivid accounts.

What on earth is this monster? Some say that it looks like a dinosaur, others say it might be a wild goose, otter or bear. Someone believes that it is nothing but ripples churned up by falling moths. It is a floating rock, one argues. One man even says it might be a submarine of DPRK. A team has been established to study the so-called monster, but so far nothing has been determined. Though the answer is yet to be found, it is of great interest to both local residents and tourists.

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The Western Slope: A Day in Paradise

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] advised to bring a small amount of food and water.

Toilet: Public toilets can be found at Shanmen (Mountain Gate), Highland Flower Park, the starting point to climb to the Heavenly Pond and the entrance to the virgin forest.

Main Scenic Spots: The Heavenly Pond, Highland Flower Park, Jinjiang Grand Valley, Jinjiang Waterfall, the Ladder River, Tiger Back, Panting Slope, No. 5 Boundary Tablet Between China and DPRK, Birch Forest Belt and Highland Moss Belt

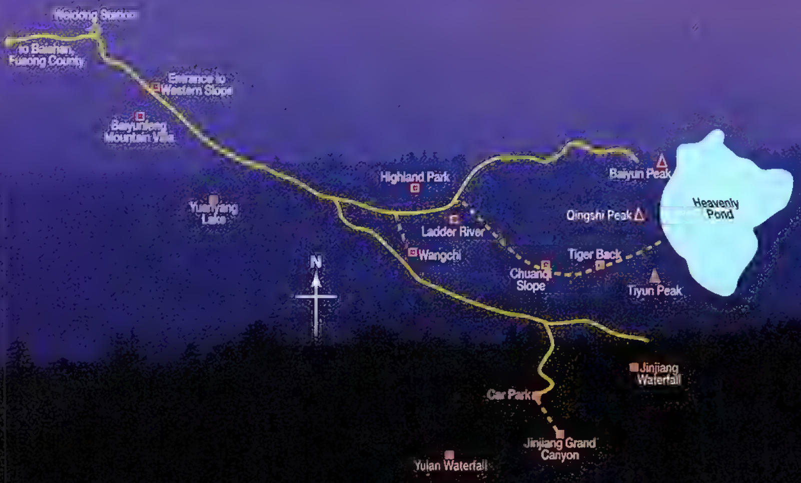
Tour Duration: One day

Comments: Since the Western Slope has just opened to visitors, the authorities stipulate that all hotels and restaurants have to be built outside the mountain pass, in order to preserve the eco-environment. In the absence of man's influence, the place exudes a natural and primitive charm. For travellers who aren't keen on large group tours and like to see normally overlooked spots, a trip to the Western Slope is for you.

[illegible]

[illegible] guests. I hurriedly pulled on a thick coat and asked the staff in the kitchen to fill a thermos flask with hot water. Then we rushed outside.

The pitch-black sky was dotted with glittering stars. Several jeeps were parked in the courtyard. A group of tourists from R. O. Korea who had checked in the night before had already loaded their luggage into the jeeps. They were one of the few tour groups that came for the mountaineering on the Western Slope. After seeing the Heavenly Pond, they would hike for 7 to 8 hours along the lake to the Northern Slope. As arranged by the Changbai Mountain Nature Reserve Tourism Bureau, I boarded one jeep and set out with


Weidong Station
to Baishan, Fusong County
Entrance to Western Slope
Baiyunfeng Mountain Villa
Yuanyang Lake
Highland Park
Ladder River
Wangchi
N
Chuanqi Slope
Tiger Back
Qingshi Peak
Baiyun Peak
Heavenly Pond
Tiyun Peak
Jinjiang Waterfall
Car Park
Jinjiang Grand Canyon
Yulan Waterfall

[illegible]s, wiping out the forests. To clear up the mess, the authorities built an earthen road to transport the damaged trees down the mountain. This road, the only one that can accommodate vehicles like ours, was actually a scar of past natural calamities.

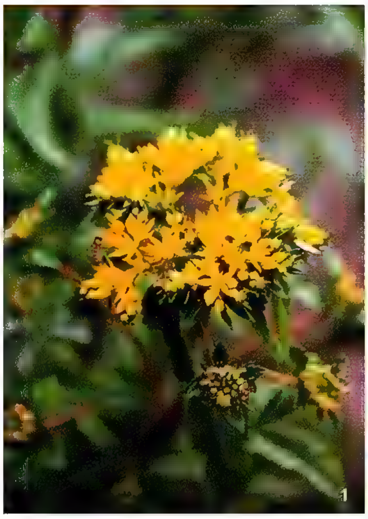
At first, everyone talked and laughed. Soon, they quieted down and laughter was replaced by snoring.

Creation Out of Total Darkness

About an hour later, the jeep stopped in a parking lot 2,000 metres above sea level. It was still totally dark and a cold, biting wind attacked us. People fetched out warmer clothes and gloves and I put on my eiderdown coat. We followed the guide forward. The driver told me that there were more than 1,300 stairs from the parking lot to the

[illegible] description of the creation of the world came to mind. The wind here was even colder and stronger. I sipped hot water from the flask and waited with everyone else for the sacred moment. Time ticked away and we were about to freeze to death, when several photography enthusiasts from R. O. Korea took out their cameras and engaged in a spell of quick shots. It turned out that a strip of changing colours of morning glow — purple, blue, orange and red — had appeared on the horizon. I watched the shifting colours in the sky and imagined that an invisible hand was mixing them up before our eyes. Soon, the wind died down and the sky brightened. A sunbeam shot out from behind the mountain and cast its ray on the lake. Then gradually, the sun revealed itself. Spirits lifted and cameras clicked to capture the moment. The sleeping lake now woke and the Changbai Mountains greeted another day.

The Western Slope: A Day in Paradise



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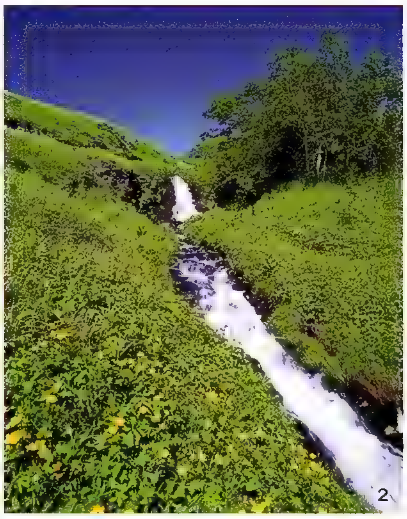

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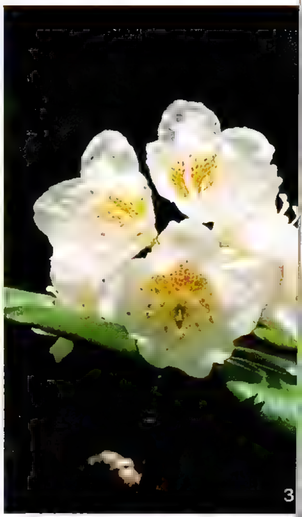

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A Living Guidebook

After the sunrise, a group of tourists from R. O. Korea marched toward the Northern Slope along the mountain ridge by the lake. I was told that the No. 5 boundary tablet between China and DPRK was in the vicinity. I tried to find it but failed. I went back alone to the parking lot to join the driver, Mr. Song. He was a local resident sent by the tourism bureau to be my guide. This was a very talkative Northeasterner. Having grown up in the Changbai Mountains, he knew everything here like the tip of his finger. How did hunters hunt? On which side of the slope, the sunny side or the shady side, do black bears come out of the caves in the spring? From which side does the main peak of the Changbai Mountains resemble a sleeping Buddha? He told me one story after another, just like a walking, talking guidebook.

The typhoon-affected areas were now cleared out, and the young trees were sparse and short. My attention was drawn to one type of young pine. Before I could ask, Master Song (a common way to address drivers in the mainland) began: "That is the Stingy Pine, which hunters relied on most in winter." "Why is that?" I asked. "It served as bedding!" I learned that this species of pine has a rich oil content. Water cannot leak through its bark and needles. Hunters spread the needles on the ground at night. "Do people still hunt here?" "Not any more," was his answer. He said that after the Changbai Mountain Nature Reserve was set up in 1960, the administration strictly banned hunting and placed all wildlife under protection of the law.

'Frozen Meat'

Soon he stopped the jeep. I got out and heard gurgling water but could not find its source. "Come over here!" Master Song guided me to a hidden stream whose narrow flow was covered up by thick trees and bushes. I looked closer and got a scare. It was no ordinary river but an underground one. Flanked by sheer cliffs, the river was three to four metres below the ground, dark and deep, like a secret tunnel. Master Song said that this was the famous Ladder River.

The river originates from the Heavenly Pond and consists of two courses: the Greater Ladder River and Lesser Ladder River. Low in temperature, the river freezes up in September and does not thaw until June the next year. At its warmest, the water is no more than 3 or 4°C. In short, it is a natural cold storage house. Local people often submerge their vegetables and meat in the river for storage. One phenomenon of the river, however, is that people can find game in it. According to Mr. Song, every summer, wild animals living at the foot of the mountain retreat to the birch forests further up to escape the heat. They go back down when winter comes. On both trips, they have to cross the river. The thick foliage at the river's edge often traps many deer and other animals, which then fall into the river. Few manage to escape, due to broken bones or starvation, and most eventually turn into "frozen meat".

If the river is a hazard for animals, the famous Highland Flower Park nearby, next to the birch forest on the Tiger Back and Panting Slope, is just the opposite. Here the ground is flat and open. Every June and July, the mountain is covered with highland blossoms including the bright red lily, tender yellow nasturtium, pure white lily of the valley, purple cowberry, brown cistanche, blue rough gentian, shrubs with round red beans and long orchids...It sounds like the legacy of an imperial garden, but every inch is natural without a trace of human interference. That's why it is also known as the "Angel's Walk". Unfortunately, I had come at the wrong time. In September, the flowers had long since withered, and I was not lucky enough to meet an "angel".

'Ignore the Pack but Beware a Lone Hog'

After leaving the Ladder River, we went to the Jinjiang Grand Valley, over 20 km southwest of the main mountain peak. To reach the valley, we had to walk through a dense forest. Mr. Song parked the jeep and then we entered the trees.

Apart from the tropical rain forest in Sabah, Malaysia, my travel experiences did not include sights any more beautiful or primitive than what I saw here. Enclosed by towering sturdy trees, I breathed in the refreshing scent of earth and plant life. Beams of sunlight penetrated the leafy canopy, giving the scene a poetic quality. Layers of autumn leaves and crisscrossing, moss-covered logs were strewn upon the ground. Mr. Song said that in the past fallen trees were collected for firewood. Now the nature reserve administration prohibited this practice, leaving the forest to its ecological cycle of growth, death and renewal.

Now and then he alerted me in a low voice: "Look, there's a pheasant!" "There goes a squirrel!" Slow to react, I often failed to see what he had pointed out. I did, however, see the back of a fleeing pheasant. Mr. Song said the influx of visitors had pushed the animals deeper into the forest. In the past, even bears and hogs could be seen here. As unfortunate as this change was, I was glad not to have to encounter hogs and bears. He then remarked that pheasants were quite foolish. In the past when they heard the hunters' gunshots, they stuck their heads into the snow but left their backsides exposed. Their long, beautiful tails were most eye-catching. People simply pulled them out of the snow to "catch" them. Hogs were the most ferocious animals. "If you run into a pack of hogs, there is no need to panic. Because in the face of danger, they simply run for their lives. But if you see only one, you must be really careful!" "Why is that?" "It will fight to the death with you, using its two sharp fangs." He spoke dramatically, saying that when cornered, a hog could kill a tiger. A chill ran up my spine, fearing that a hog might appear at any moment.

As we walked on, Mr. Song pointed at a rotten tree trunk, saying: "This is a bear's home." A moment before he had said that bears had left the area; and now we find a bear home? "Are there bears around here?" I stammered. "Don't worry; it's an abandoned home." I learned that it was customary for a bear to find a hollow tree trunk in which to hibernate during winter. Unlike frogs and snakes, if disturbed during hibernation, bears will come out and fight, or flee. Mr. Song said that hunters loved to hunt bears in winter, because the moisture from their breathing, when meeting the cold air outside the tree trunk, would form frost. A hunter could tell if there was a bear just by seeing frost on a tree trunk. The hunters would plug up the hollow with chicken wire. With just a few gunshots, no matter how strong the bear is, it cannot run away. As I looked at the rotten tree trunk, I could not tell whether a bear had died here.

A Place of Constant Change

Soon we reached the end of the forest where a zigzagging valley presented itself. The valley's northern and southern sections merge 2.5 km south of Yizi Mountain. Viewed from the air, it forms a letter "Y". Of the 14-km-long valley, the Southern Jinjiang Valley makes up six kilometres while the northern section comprises four kilometres. With an average depth of 87 metres, it is the largest volcanic rock valley in China. According to historical records, the Changbai Mountains erupted several times, but it was the eruptions of 1702 which created this valley. Centuries of erosion by wind and rain and the Jinjiang River's flow have made the valley as deep as it is today. Meanwhile, the basalt lava has formed into grotesque rock "forests", the result of rains and flooding, on both sides of the valley.

The odd lava rocks together with the brook flowing in the valley constitute a magnificent scene. Lava rock is harder than earth but softer than other stones. When washed by rain, it can change into all manner of strange shapes. So the terrain continues to change with the passage of time. What I saw this time might not be there if I came again. As a result, the lava rocks provide a spot one will never tire of seeing. Pointing at the well-known "Double Humped Camel" rock, Mr. Song said: "It really did use to look like a camel, but now it doesn't so much." Perhaps in time it will change into a rooster or a rabbit. After all, the odd lava rocks are full of change and possibility. A veteran worker with the Songhuan River Forestry Bureau discovered the rock

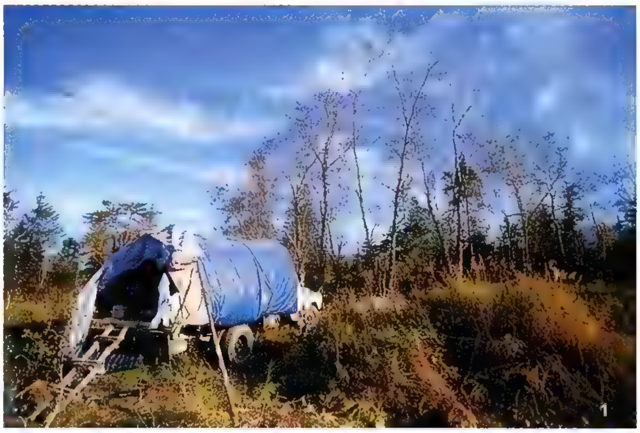
Previous page: The landscape of the western slope is even more pristine than that of the northern slope. (by Shi Yongting)

1. **There is a great variety of plants on Mount Changbai. (by Lang Qi)**
2. **The view of the upper reaches of the Ladder River is lovely. Who could imagine that the middle and lower reaches of the Ladder River has become a place of death for many animals! (by Shi Yongting)**
3. **The highland azalea is one of the flowers of often seen on Mount Changbai. (by Lang Qi)**
4. **The wild flowers are in full bloom everywhere in Highland Flower Park. It is also called "Angel's Walk". (by Wen Bo)**

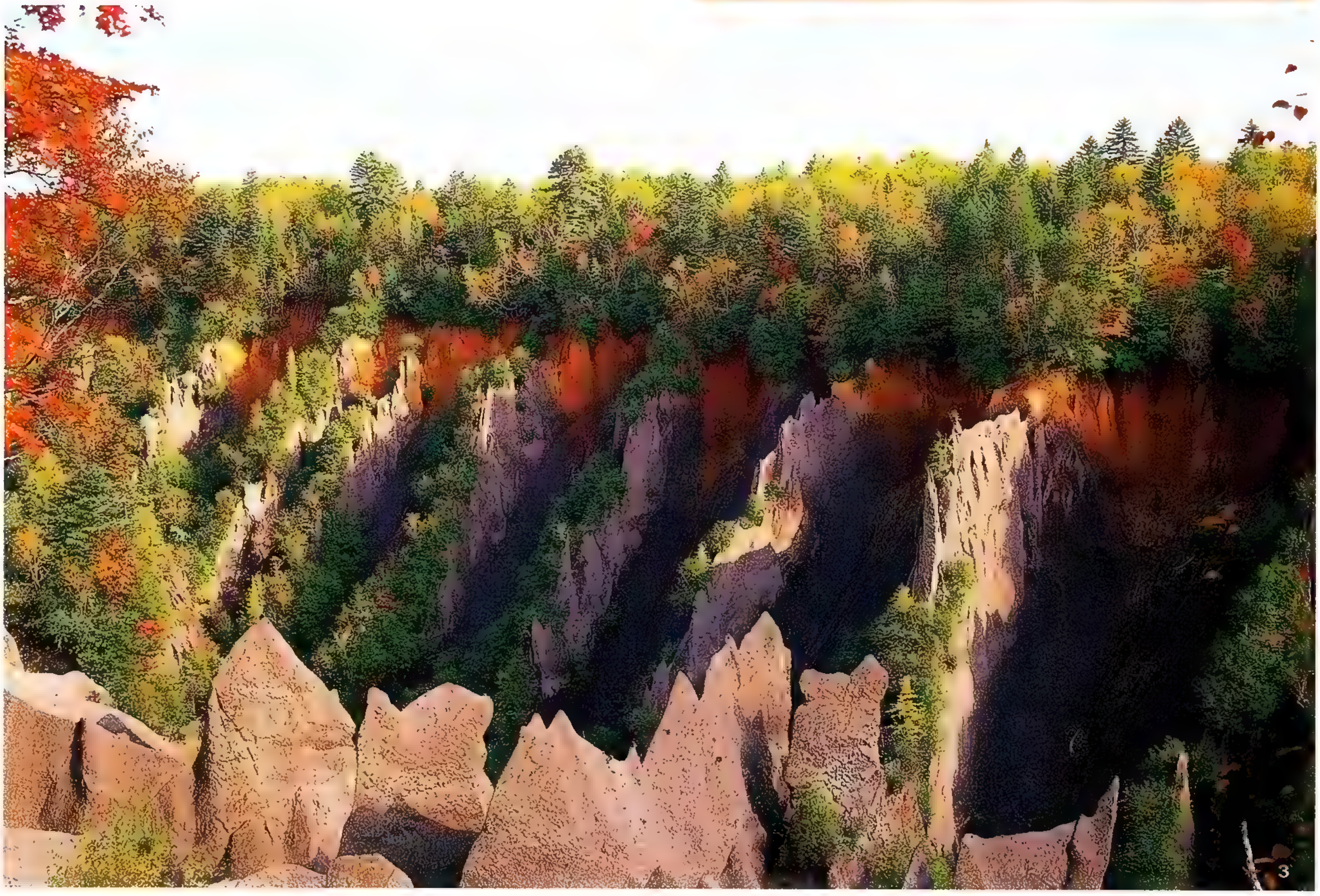
forest in 1992, when he stumbled upon the spot after losing his way on a trip into the mountains. When he described what he had seen, nobody believed him, until 1994, when an official made an inspection tour. Only then did this mysterious site become public knowledge.

As I walked alongside the valley, a wind whispered in my ear. Autumn leaves fell with a rustling sound. Birdsong was heard now and then. It was easy to forget the time, the outer world, other pleasures and worries....

Can humankind live forever in harmony with this place? I sincerely hope so.



1. **Because of damage done by two mighty hurricanes, the mixed forest of coniferous and broadleaf trees and the coniferous forest on the western slope are extremely sparse. (by Chu Kit)**
2. **Green retreats with the coming autumn. The endless winter is returning to Mount Changbai. (by Shi Yongting)**
3. **The grotesque rock "forests" are on both sides of the valley. (by Shi Yongting)**
4. **The medicinal value of cultivated ginseng is not as good as wild ginseng. Yet it has the curative effect of compensatory qi and blood to the human body. (by Chu Kit)**
5. **Local ginseng farmers must confront the facts of less land allocation by the government, the high cost of ginseng plots and other concerns. (by Chu Kit)**
6. **The endearing, vermilion seeds of ginseng. (by Chu Kit)**
7. **Ginseng cannot receive direct sunlight. So the locals have covered the ginseng plot with plastic sheets. This has created a shady and cool environment. (by Wang Miao)**



Notes: In the ginseng garden

The Chinese pharmaceutical classic Shen Nong's Materia Medica states, "The 365 kinds of medicinal herbs are divided into three grades, and ginseng belongs to the top grade." Among ginseng from China, wild ginseng from the Changbai Mountains is the most famous. In 1981, a 160-year-old ginseng plant weighing 285 grammes was found in Wusong County under which jurisdiction the Western Slope belongs. Today, this huge wild ginseng plant is on display in Jilin Hall of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Wild ginseng, also known as mountain ginseng, is mostly found in mixed deciduous and coniferous forests some 1,000 to 2,000 metres above sea level, but it is sparse and difficult to harvest. Gradually, cultivated ginseng appeared. Now the Changbai Mountains have a history of ginseng cultivation of more than 400 years. In this area, Wusong, Ji'an, Changbai and Huinan counties are most renowned for their ginseng. The town of Songjianghe in Wusong County is also a famed ginseng cultivation centre.

In Songjianghe Town, there are many garden plots covered with white plastic sheeting. Some are as large as several football pitches. These are ginseng gardens, either private or state-owned. Generally, the state-owned ones are larger. Under the guidance of the tourism bureau, I visited a state-owned ginseng garden. When I arrived, workers were busy in digging up the medicinal plant. It was harvest time.

The manager said that the cultivation period for ginseng gardens is six years and the method is purposes. To begin with, the plot must be virgin forest soil, in which no crops have ever been planted. The soil should not be too wet and the temperature should not be high. Because ginseng rapidly absorbs the soil's nutritious elements, ginseng roots must be taken out and re-planted in new soil every two to three years. Otherwise they will not grow and will become rotten. A wooden board and plastic sheeting had to be employed to keep direct sunlight off the young plants. When asked how wild ginseng could grow several dozen years and even hundreds of years without a change of soil, Mr. Song estimated that the humus soil in virgin forest provided a steady supply of nutrients.

To plant ginseng, large patches of virgin forest have to be levelled which leads directly to water and soil erosion. In 1998, a serious flood ruined a large area of land. According to a local official, measures have been taken to reduce ginseng cultivation for environmental reasons, leading to a sharp rise in the cost of leasing land for such purposes. He said that four years ago, a piece of 0.0009 hectares of land cost 40 yuan; now you are lucky to get that for 100 yuan. This development has made ginseng of the Changbai Mountains more valuable.

Even so, I am sure that a visitor buying ginseng here will be pleased with the price. At the farm produce market at Songjianghe Town, a kilogramme of dried garden ginseng sold for just 15 yuan, while the price of a branch of wild ginseng was 25 to 1,000 yuan. The local official divulged that the secret to choosing the best ginseng was that the plant must be long, with many roots. A branch of quality ginseng is long with many roots and a big head. The more it resembles the human body the better the ginseng is.

Visitors must be very careful inside the ginseng gardens. The local ginseng planters have installed devices called "ground guns" to keep ginseng thieves away. It was said recently that the local government disagreed with this practice. Yet, one still can see signs warning of "ground guns". It is hard to distinguish if they are genuine or not. However, my suggestion is that unless accompanied by locals or with the permission of the owners of the ginseng plot, you should not wander about the gardens.

Travelling Along the Border

The Southern Slope

To enter the Southern Slope of Mount Changbai, you must present a Border Area Pass. Along the way, you will not meet tourists but rather patrolling soldiers. When you reach the mountaintop, what first catches your attention is not the Heavenly Pond in the distance but a boundary tablet. After all, this is where China and DPRK meet, the edge of China's territory.

Road: Dirt road **Opening Dates:** Mid-June to mid-September **Admission Fee:** Free

Accommodation: None (take plenty of food and drinking water) **Toilet:** None

Main Scenic Spots: The Heavenly Pond, First Sentry of the Yalu River, The Grand Yalu River Canyon, Carbonised Wood, No.4 Boundary Tablet of China and DPRK, the Silver Birch Belt, Alpine Tundra Belt

Tour Duration: One day

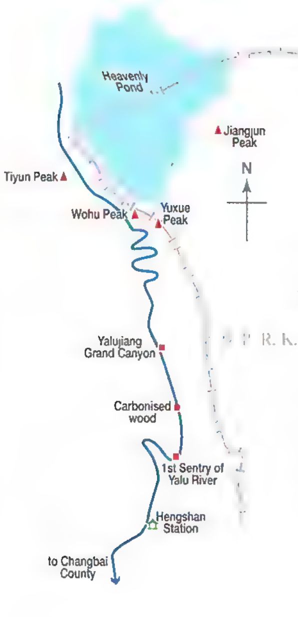
Comments: The Southern Slope, being a border area, is partially open to tourists, but tourist facilities are poor. The territory of DPRK is across the river. It is a unique place to "be one with" nature, and is particularly suited to those fond of exploration.

Escorted by a Soldier

On a map, the route to the Southern Slope almost overlaps the line indicating the Yalu River, the boundary between China and DPRK, forming both a geographical and international border.

Carrying Border Area Passes issued by the Tourist Bureau with us, the guide, driver and I left the town of Changbai, passed Hengshan Station of the Changbai Mountains Protection Bureau and soon reached the pass known as the "First Border Sentry of Yalu River". The frontier guards asked a few questions, checked our vehicle, collected our passes and let us go. A soldier had boarded our vehicle to accompany us.

Since DPRK lies on the opposite side of the Yalu River, this watery border is an important place for national defence. Sentries are posted on mountainous paths all along the river and troops patrol the area. With current relations between the two countries being sound, the atmosphere was not as tense as I had imagined. This was why the area was partially open to tourists. Still, the frontier guards were on high alert.

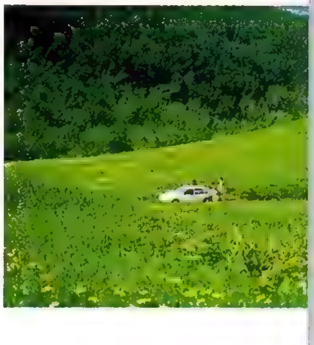


A Former Qing Dynasty Hunting Ground

As our jeep drove up a rocky path alongside the Yalu River, I noticed the clear flowing water at the foot of the mountain. The 795-kilometre-long river originates from the Heavenly Pond, files through Changbai County, the city of Baishan, the city of Ji'an , then Hengren County and Kuandian County in Liaoning Province, and finally reaches Sandaogou, south of the city of Dandong, where it enters Yellow Sea. From ancient times, it has served as a long, natural border between China and DPRK.

In fact, border defence in the past was not nearly as strict as it is today. Historical records from Emperor Kangxi's reign in the early Qing Dynasty, state that the people of DPRK inhabiting Huishan and Maoshan often "crossed the river, built houses and tilled the land; there was no restriction on their entry and exit." Because the boundary was unclear at that time, local residents of both sides were allowed to go back and forth. Later on, when Manchurians ruled China, they decided to protect this native land where their ancestors had lived. They developed local Manchurian businesses, monopolising the rich variety of local produce such as ginseng and dongzhu in Jilin. The Qing Court sealed up the border for more than 200 years from 1677 (16th year of Emperor Kangxi's reign) to 1875 (first year of Emperor Guangxu's reign) and declared Fengtian Province (present-day Liaoning Province) and Jilin Province to be forbidden zones. Here they built up palaces, Manchurian settlements, hunting grounds and barred outsiders from the mountains. The Southern Slope beside the upper reaches of the Yalu River and present-day Changbai County became part of the Shengjing Hunting Ground, where Manchurians practised archery and hunting, horsemanship and martial arts. In those days, sentries were also posted within the hunting ground and troops were stationed to keep local residents from entering to dig up ginseng, fell trees or hunt. In 1842 (22nd year of Emperor Daoguang's reign), troops instituted night patrols in the vicinity of the Southern Slope. Anyone found felling trees, digging up ginseng or hunting was arrested for thievery.

Eventually, DPRK decided to set up post houses on the Yalu and Tumen rivers. Upon hearing this, the Qing Court, fretting that this would give free rein to river crossings and result in the depletion of local resources, delivered a letter in the name of the Rites Board to the king of DPRK in 1690 (29th year of Emperor Kangxi's reign). It read, "Judging by the



establishment of post houses by the people by DPRK on the southern bank, the northern bank is doubtless the territory of China. The clear-cut border line between China and DPRK has long been in existence." In 1711 (50th year of his reign), Emperor Kangxi issued a decree to the Secretaries of the Grand Secretariat, stating: "The area northwest of the Yalu River is the territory of China. The area southeast of the river is the territory of DPRK. The river serves as the boundary...." Today, there are rules for mutual visits between the peoples of the two countries, and one must apply for a visa to cross the border.

Trees Turned into Charcoal 300 Years Ago

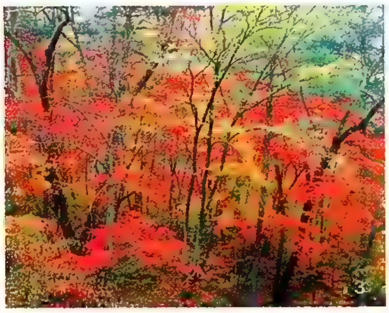
Often along the way, the soldiers of DPRK stepped out from their checkpoints across the river to look in our direction. Obviously, tourists are rare, so anyone passing causes a stir. The higher we hiked, the narrower the river became. In some places, it was so narrow that one might jump across it. I was tempted to try it myself, but when I turned round and saw the serious look on our soldier's face, I changed my mind. Only then did it occur to me why a soldier was assigned to accompany us.

When we got to the northern side of Huya Peak, we saw a disintegrated cliff. Amidst the rocks and gravel was a pile of blackened objects. Studying them closely, I realised they were segments of former trees, which had been victims of volcanic eruption. The Changbai Mountains are volcanic mountains and the last eruption was in 1702, 300 years before. It was that eruption, I was told, which destroyed the trees, covered them in lava and burnt them into charcoal.

A Boundary Tablet 500 Metres from My Goal

Finally, our jeep stopped at the foot of Tiyun Peak, not far from the Heavenly Pond. The guide and I walked gingerly towards the lake. We took extra care, as the loose gravel was so slippery. With one misstep, you could roll right down the slope. In the distance, we caught sight of blue water. There were about 500 metres between the lake and us, but our way was unexpectedly blocked by a boundary tablet engraved with the Chinese characters "Zhongguo - 4" (China - 4). On the other side, "DPRK - 4" was etched in Korean symbols. So this was the No. 4 boundary tablet between China and DPRK. It meant that DPRK lay just beyond the tablet; it meant that we had to stop.

I was seized by mixed feelings of delight and disappointment: delighted to have come all the way to the edge of the country; disappointed that I could not get to the Heavenly Pond! I had climbed the other two slopes in the last few days and the Heavenly Pond had been my final goal of each climb. Today, a mere 500 metres separated us. What a pity! Gazing at the distant, limpid water, I mused that so many things are beyond our control in life. Hadn't my trip just proven that?



For Your Information: What about the Eastern Slope?

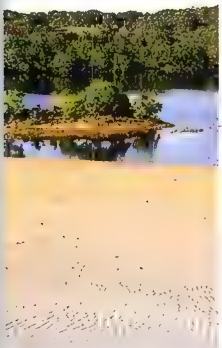
In fact, there is a fourth route up the Changbai Mountains, the Eastern Slope in DPRK. It should not be too difficult to go there unless you are from Hong Kong or Macao. Anyone from Mainland China or Taiwan may join the tourist groups organised by the Travel Agency of Changbai County for a three-day trip, which includes Mt. Paekdusan (the Korean name for the Changbai Mountains), for 1,090 yuan. Unfortunately, due to border regulations, applications by Hong Kong and Macao residents are not accepted, so it is not fully open to tourists.

1. **Mount Changbei in summer is a world of green. It is also the busy season for travel. (Wang Miao)**
2. **Mount Changbai Spring enlivens the grand and holy Mount Changbai. (by Shi Yongting)**
3. **In autumn, Mount Changbai woods are full of colour in riotous profusion, like a fairy tale. (by Shi Yongting)**
4. **Enjoy the landscape of Mount Changbai from the southern slope. You will get an even wider view and a different feeling. (by Wang Miao)**
5. **The First Sentry of Yalu River is the sentry post where Border Area Passes are collected. (by Chu Kit)**

A Reminder: Southern Slope Border Area Pass

To climb the Southern Slope, you must apply for a Border Area Pass from the County Tourist Bureau via the Travel Agency of Changbai County two days in advance. The purpose of the visit, your name and any articles you will carry are to be noted on the pass. The pass is free, but the travel agency may ask for a small service charge. Before entering the area, frontier guards at the First Sentry of Yalu River will examine and keep the pass for you. Then a soldier will be assigned to accompany you to ensure that no violations of the frontier defence regulations occur.

Tel no. of the Travel Agency of Changbai County: (439) 822 8639 / 822 8609

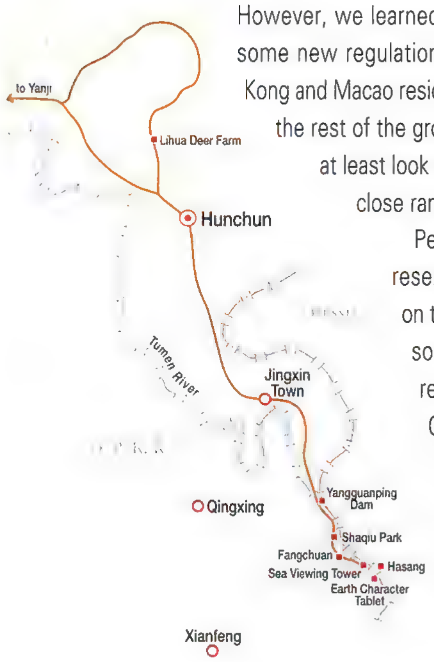


Hunchun: Three Countries at a Glance

Hunchun sounds like "deer tail" to Hong Kong people, but the place is best known for a spot on the border called Fangchuan. Here, one can see three countries: China, DPRK and Russia.

I went to this small border town in China's northeastern Jilin Province on a China-DPRK and China-Russia tour hosted by a local travel agency. However, we learned upon arrival that according to some new regulations by border authorities, Hong Kong and Macao residents could not leave China with the rest of the group. Luckily, at Hunchun I could at least look at the neighbouring countries at close range.

People say that Hunchun's terrain resembles a reclining dog snoozing on the ground. The tip of its tail, the southernmost point of Hunchun, rests on the three-way border of China, DPRK and Russia. When a cock crows and a dog yips here people of all three countries can clearly hear it. Nicknamed the "golden triangle of northeast Asia", this tiny spot is Fangchuan.



Stretching into Neighbouring Countries

Some 75 km from Hunchun's city district, Fangchuan is over an hour's drive away. The scenery along the route was a real treat for the eye. After we passed a small town called Jingxin, we came upon a huge dike, a reminder of Fangchuan's history. For a long time, Fangchuan was linked with Hunchun by two narrow strips of land (which form part of the dog's tail). The Yangguanping section, the narrowest of the two, was washed away by the Tumen River in a 1957 flood. For a long time, Chinese people could only get to Fangchuan via either Russia or DPRK. It was not until 1983, when the newly built Yangguanping Road opened to traffic, that Fangchuan was reunited with the motherland. Now Fangchuan has an attractive "corridor" along the black stone dike. Walking along this unique pathway, one sees the vast land of Russia to the left through iron wire mesh, while on the right the Tumen River divides China and DPRK. The terrain was interesting, but it wasn't my ultimate destination.

On the dike, we came across a group of Chinese people of Korean nationality having a picnic. While gazing at the enchanting views of the Tumen River, they sat round a cloth on which was laid meat, pastries and liquor. In high spirits, they toasted each other as they ate. Part of the Yanbian Korean Nationality Autonomous Prefecture, Hunchun has a population of a quarter million, of which 47 percent is of Han nationality and 42 percent is of Korean Nationality. Many signboards in the city were in both Chinese and Korean languages, and there were many Korean restaurants. So it was no surprise to see people of Korean Nationality on the dike. They were most hospitable. When they realised I was watching them, one of the men rose with a cup of wine saying, "Come and have a toast!" Being a teetotaller, I declined, thanking him. It would not do to get drunk before reaching Fangchuan.

The Sand Bank

After a while, we passed a strip of "desert" which appeared out of nowhere. The yellowish, undulating sand dunes covered 1.19 million square metres. Hunchun is in the lower reaches of the Tumen River where precipitation is adequate and lush vegetation covers the ground. So why was this heap of sand here? I then learned that precisely because of ample water, the river's flow has a strong, corrosive power. "Kissed" by the river day and night, the rocks on the banks have been gradually ground into fine sand. When winter comes and the river freezes over, the sand is blown up by the wind and then settles again to form this unexpected "desert". Hard rocks can melt under the force of gentleness! Nature has told us this truth before and proves it again at this place. Now the "desert" has been turned into a sand dune park by the local tourism bureau. Miraculously, a clear, natural lake is also found in the park. Perhaps because the park had just opened, there were few visitors. I lay down and stretched out on the soft sand by the lakeshore, enjoying the serenity and harmony of nature. For someone like me who is normally surrounded by tall buildings and noise, it was a great moment of escape.

Park Admission: *10 yuan*

Reminder: *While the sand dune area is not large, there are few scenic views or visitors. Do not travel too far into the "desert" alone or you may get lost. Also, take along enough water and food.*

Kim Jong Il Went to Russia from Here

Fangchuan was soon within sight. Its advantageous location attracted tourism early. The three-storey Sea Viewing Tower of traditional Chinese architecture, which was built on a small hill by a local travel agency in 1993, is the place from where all three countries can be seen at once. Next to the tower are the border guards' observation pavilion and office, which are patrolled by armed soldiers. Visitors must explain the purpose of their visit to the guards before they can ascend the tower.

On the tower, signboards on the east, south and west walls indicate Russia, the Sea of Japan and DPRK, reminding visitors to look across the land to see the foreign countries. In the south, the belt-like Tumen River gently flows into the Sea of Japan. The word "sea" in the tower's name refers to this body of water. A bridge spanning the river links Russia to DPRK and offers the only entry and exit point on land between the two countries. When he made an 18-day tour of Russia in late July last year, Kim Jong Il's special train crossed this very bridge before it travelled across Siberia. On the DPRK side, the rolling hills and land appeared somewhat desolate. People said that due to an energy shortage, trees on the mountain had been cut for firewood. The surroundings were very quiet and not a soul could be seen. Another direction looks on a patch of Russian grassland, a lake and a small town, which showed quite a different scene. In the distance, farmers, male and female, toiled in the fields. The women wore red scarves while the men sported blue trousers. The town behind them was filled with European-style, red brick houses, and we saw a train chugging along a railway. The town, grassland and lake formed a mesmerising picture.

Admission to the Sea Viewing Tower: *20 yuan*

Reminder: *For defence reasons, the border guards' observation pavilion and office building cannot be photographed.*

1. **Standing at Fangchuan, the territory of three countries, China, DPRK and Russia, are within sight. The bridge spanning Tumen River is the railway bridge of DPRK and Russia. (by Chu Kit)**
2. **Lovely children of Vladivostok in Russia. (by Chu Kit)**
3. **Overlooking the territory of Russia from the Sea Viewing Tower. (by Chu Kit)**
4. **Nearly half of the population of Hunchun is of Korean nationality. (by Chu Kit)**

Starting Point of the Sino-Russian Border

Several hundred metres south of the Sea Viewing Tower, the Sino-Russian border is marked with a tablet stating the "Earth Character Tablet". From the mouth of the Wusuli River to that of the Tumen River there are eight border tablets, each bearing different characters. Erected in 1886 when the two countries re-inspected the boundary east of Hunchun, the 1.44-metre-high granite tablet displays "Earth Character Tablet" on the Chinese side and a "T" on the Russian side. In 1960, to protect this important tablet from being washed away by flood, the Chinese government built a dike 6 to 8 metres high and 1,860 metres long.

Translated by F. Huang

A Deer Farm in Hunchun

Mr. Tai, a deer-raiser in Hunchun (by Chu Kit)

Deer from Hunchun are known throughout China, so I visited a deer farm. The Lihua Deer Farm, 15 km from the city, is one of three branch farms of the Hunchun City Deer Farm and is the largest of these.

More than 2,000 sika deer were being raised here under the care of several households in a contract arrangement. I was surprised that the farm's main product was pilose antler while products more famous abroad, such as deer blood powder, deer heart and other medicinal raw materials were only sidelines. Annually, the farm yields some 1,000 to 1,500 kg of pilose antler, which is mostly exported to Japan, DPRK, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Hong Kong. Deer on this farm are fed natural oak leaves rather than soya bean cakes as is done in many other places. Because the cultivation method is right, the products have high medicinal value and enjoy a good reputation far and wide.

Mr. Tai, who had contracted to raise more than 20 deer, told me that prices for deer products had dropped markedly in recent years. Now each kilogramme of pilose antler only sells for some 4,000 yuan. Deer feed, however, has also been low, so he is still making a profit. His new motorcycle and well-furnished home attest to that.

According to Mr. Tai, after a deer turns one year old, the pilose antler can be cut twice a year until the animal is over ten years old and reaches the time of antler reduction. Tender antler is highly valued and when a young antler has two branches, it is believe to have the highest medicinal content. When an antler grows into three branches, however, only the tip can be sold, for the lower sections are too hard to be of any use.

A sika deer with its antler c

Travel Tips

Transport:

Flights:

There are frequent flights every day from Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou to Changchun and Yanji, two important cities in Jilin Province. For more information, please refer to the Executive's Memo on p. 86-87.

Travel Seasons:

The peak travel season for Mount Changbai is from mid-June to mid-September, and the mountain's features change over this period:

Time	Weather	Possibility to View Tianchi	View
mid-Jun-mid-Jul	☀	☺	Although the mountain is still covered in snow, flowers begin to blossom.
mid-Jul-mid-Aug	🌧	☹	Verdant trees and beautiful flowers
mid-Aug-mid-Sept	☀	☺	Brilliant autumn views

Temperature Changes According to Altitude on Mount Changbai:

Altitude (metres)	Annual Average °C	Average °C in July (hottest month)	Average °C in Jan (coldest month)	Highest °C	Lowest °C
300-600	2.2-4.8	19.8-22.2	-13.8-18.5	36.7	-42.6
1,100	-0.3	16.8	-19.6	30.2	-43.0
1,700	-2.9	13.7	-20.9	26.1	-43.6
2,000	-4.4	12.0	-21.7	23.8	-43.6
2,624	-7.3	8.6	-23.2	19.2	-44

Northern Slope of Mount Changbai

Stopover: Erdaobaihe Town

To Erdaobaihe Town:

1. Take train No. K 953/2 from Changchun to Erdaobaihe Town. The train leaves at 1:52p.m. and arrives at Baihe Station at 4:30 a.m. the next day.
2. Take train No. 251 or 631 from Changchun or Jilin to Yanji. Change to a long-distance bus to Erdaobaihe. Duration: 4 hours. Ticket: 25 yuan.

Accommodation in Erdaobaihe Town:

Xinda Hotel	Standard room: 180 yuan	Tel: (433) 5720111
Yalin Hotel	Standard room: 100 yuan	Tel: (433) 5710303
Public hostels	30-50 yuan/ bed	Situation: can be found in small lanes

Accommodation on Mount Changbai:

Baishan Hotel	Standard room: 160 yuan	Tel: (433)5718291
Hot Spring Villa	Standard room: 280 yuan	Tel: (433) 5746066
Changbai Mountains Int'l Hotel	Standard room: 600 yuan	Tel: (433) 5746001

Touring the Northern Slope:

1. Between July and September, mini-buses run up Mount Changbai from the Baihe Railway Station and Erdao Town Bus Terminal. A mini-bus holds 7-8 people. Fare: 500 yuan. To reach the Heavenly Pond, you must hike or take a jeep from the exchange station. Fare: 80 yuan/ person.
2. Car hire: Tourists can book a four-seater jeep from Erdaobaihe Town to the entrance of the northern slope. Fare: 150 yuan. Hire for a one-day tour excluding the Heavenly Pond: 300 yuan/ day; including the Heavenly Pond: 400 yuan/ day.

Route:

Erdaobaihe Town → (25 km) Entrance of Northern Slope → (23.5 km) Exchange Station to Heavenly Pond → (10 km) Heavenly Pond → (1.5 km) Waterfall

Enquiry:

Mount Changbai Natural Reserve Forestry Travel Corp., reception department: Yu Wanzhi (manager) Tel: (433) 5742078

Western Slope of Mount Changbai

Stopover: Erdaobaihe Town / Songjianghe River Town, Fusong County

1. Upon returning to Erdaobaihe Town after touring the northern slope, visitors can take a bus to the entrance of the western slope along the Huanqu Highway. Distance: 76 km. Duration: 2 hours.
2. Take a bus to Songjianghe River Town in Fusong County. Duration: 2 hours. Hire a local car or join the local tours. The Town is 30 km from the entrance of the western slope.

Accommodation in Songjiang River Town:

Tianchi Hotel	Tel: (439) 6313077	Twin-bed room: 50-100 yuan
Songlin Hotel	Tel: (439) 6313601	Standard room: 200-300 yuan

Accommodation at Entrance of Western Slope:

Baiyunfeng Villa Situation: 1 km from entrance to the western gate
Tel: (439) 6310019 Twin-bed room: 150-200 yuan

Touring the Western Slope:

1. Car hire: A jeep for four people costs 300 yuan/ day.
2. Tours: I recommend a two-day, organised tour. Visit scenic spots on the western slope on the first day and appreciate the sunrise at the Heavenly Pond early on the second morning. Then, walk to the northern slope along the trails. On the way, you'll come across Baiyun Peak, the highest peak of Mount Changbai. Duration: 8-10 hours. Fee: Tour guide and service charge: 150 yuan; entry ticket: 60 yuan; fare: 80 yuan. A tour group can be formed with a minimum of five people.

Route: Entrance to Western Slope → (42 km) Heavenly Pond

Enquiry: Western Slope (Xipo) Travel Bureau:
Meng Fanying (chairperson) Tel: (439) 6310019/ 6313077

Southern Slope of Mount Changbai

Stopover: Changbai Town, Changbai County

To Changbai Town: Take a bus from Songjiang River Town. Duration: 2 hours.

Accommodation:

Changbai County Hotel Add: 21 Baishan St, Changbai County Tel: (439) 822235
Standard room: 180 yuan

Touring the Southern Slope:

Tours: Visitors can join one-day tours organised by the Changbai County Travel Service. The tour includes the First Sentry of the Yalu River, carbonised wood area, Yalujiang Grand Canyon, birch forest, highland fungi zone, Heavenly Pond. Fee: 148/ person.
Add: 21 Baishan St, Changbai Town, Changbai Chaoxian Autonomous County.
Tel: (439) 8228639 / 828609

Route: Changbai Town → (56 km) First Sentry of the Yalu River → (32.7 km) Heavenly Pond

Hunchun

To Hunchun: Take a bus from Changbai County to Yanji, and then continue on to Hunchun.

Accommodation:

Hunchun Hotel	Tel: (440) 7519243	Standard room: 120 yuan
Jisheng Hotel	Tel: (440) 7523057-8666	Standard room: 120 yuan

Travel Services:

Hunchun Int'l Travel Service	Tel: (440) 7514692 / 7529157
Alilang Int'l Travel Service	Tel: (440) 7519133 / 7536111

Preparing for an Autumn Visit (early September):

The weather on Mount Changbai in early September is sunny and dry, and is therefore ideal for hiking. The following were the main articles in my knapsack:

Clothes:

Gore-Tex, wind-resistant jacket — A quality wind-resistant jacket is a must on the windy mountain, especially at the Heavenly Pond.

Fleece — Light and warm, this item is my favourite. In early autumn, it provides just enough warmth along with a Gore-Tex jacket.

Eiderdown coat — A necessity if staying overnight or watching the sunrise on the mountain.

Nylon sport trousers — Wind- and water-resistant clothing is equally important for the legs.

Sun hat — To shield you not only from the sun, but also from strong wind. Otherwise, anyone with long hair like me will have a mass of tangles to comb out.

Hiking shoes — When climbing to the edge of the Heavenly Pond or trekking over the rocks and rotted wood of the primitive forest, you will appreciate a pair of well-made, comfortable hiking shoes.

Other articles:

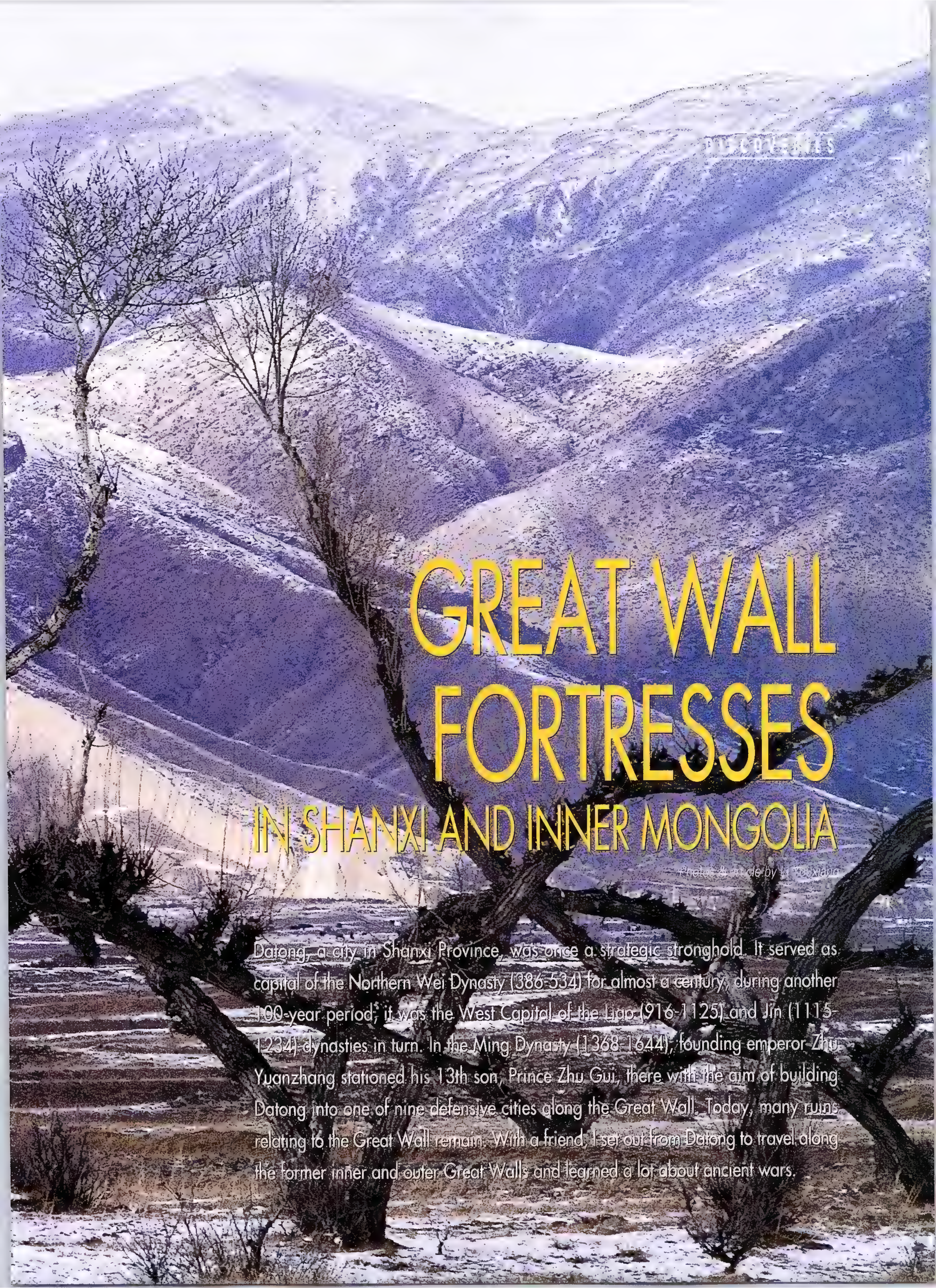
Thermos flask — A few sips of warm tea or water can be restorative on the chilly mountain.

Small torch — The electricity supply on Mount Changbai is unstable. If the electric goes out, a torch helps you find the lavatory, write in your dairy, etc.

Whistle — Mount Changbai is a massive place. If you become lost or have an accident, a whistle can alert people nearby or even a great distance away.

Gauze mask — The roads of the western and southern slopes are not yet well developed. A gauze mask blocks out sand and dust, allowing you to breathe more freely.

Crysanthemum tea — Good for soothing the throat in dry mountain climates.



GREAT WALL FORTRESSES
IN SHANXI AND INNER MONGOLIA

Photos & article by Li Youxiang

Datong, a city in Shanxi Province, was once a strategic stronghold. It served as capital of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) for almost a century; during another 100-year period, it was the West Capital of the Liao (916-1125) and Jin (1115-1234) dynasties in turn. In the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), founding emperor Zhu Yuanzhang stationed his 13th son, Prince Zhu Gui, there with the aim of building Datong into one of nine defensive cities along the Great Wall. Today, many ruins relating to the Great Wall remain. With a friend, I set out from Datong to travel along the former inner and outer Great Walls and learned a lot about ancient wars.

On the Road in Bitter Winter

It was snowing heavily on January 14, 2001 as I rushed to the Datong Railway Station to meet Xiaofeng, my companion for the trip. A few years my junior, Xiaofeng is a college graduate and a photography fan. Furthermore, he is keenly interested in studies of the Great Wall, which made him an ideal partner for this tour.

The train left the station at 7:20, crossed the railway bridge over the Yuhe River and was soon five kilometres from the city centre. Pointing at the undulating ridge lying to the north, Xiaofeng said it was Mapu Mountain, also called Baideng Mountain, where Liu Bang, founding emperor of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), fought the Huns (Xiongnu) after he was trapped there. I had not expected to see an ancient battlefield so close to the city.

2

The train sped eastward. Every five kilometres or so, an earth-rammed fortress appeared. While unimpressive by today's standards, they had been ancient army posts. These military barracks have long since become civilian villages named Ershilipu, Sanshilipu or Sichilipu, meaning "a fortress (pu) of such a distance (20 *li*, 30 *li* or 40 *li*) away".

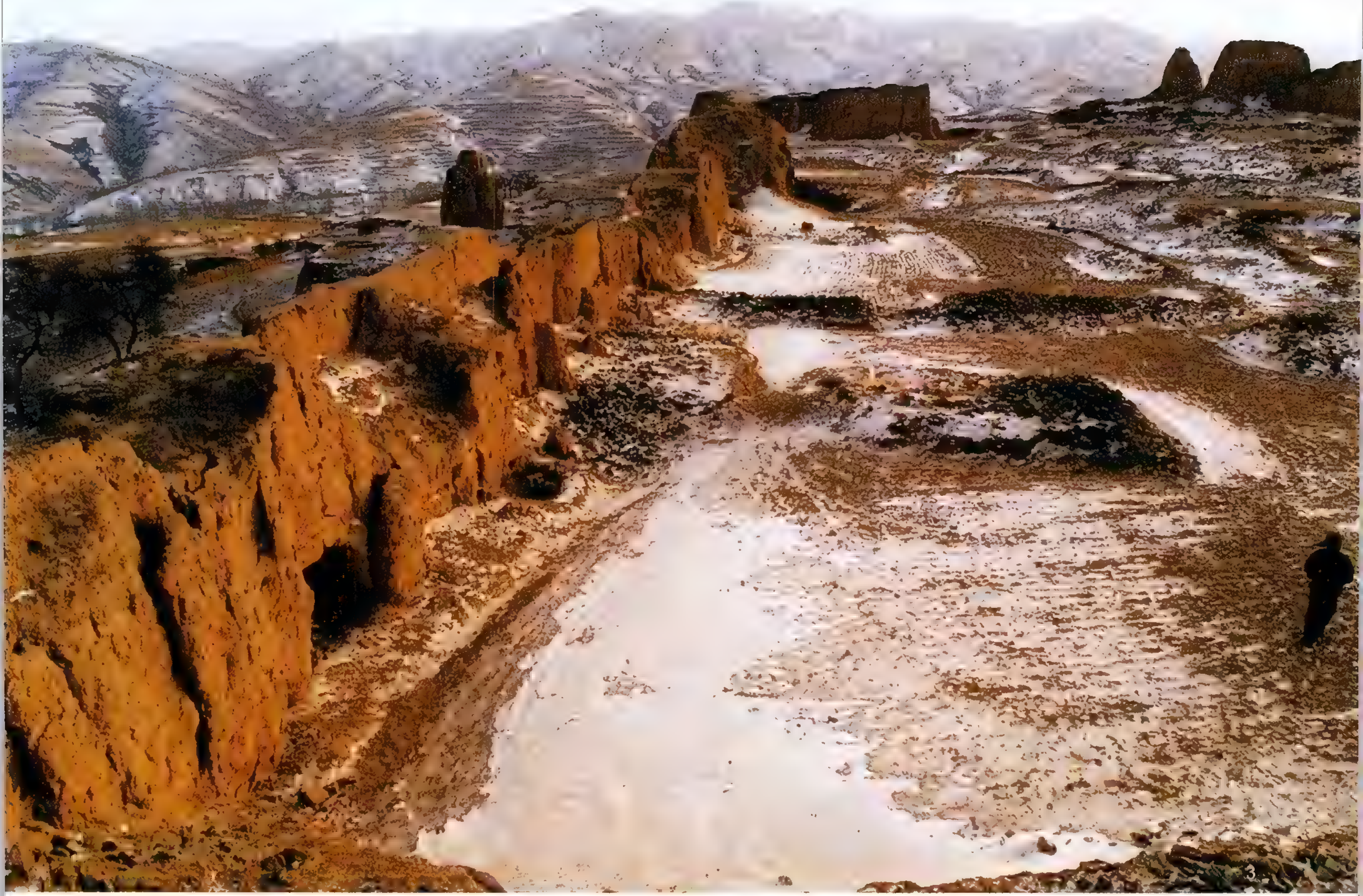
After travelling for about an hour, I looked north and saw the walls which had surrounded ancient Datong, one of the major defensive bulwarks built on China's northern border. The city wall is made of rammed earth and the highway parallels it like a giant python until it reaches the foot of Yunmen (Cloud Gate) Mountain in Yanggao. The train conductor explained that because the Beijing-Datong Railway runs along the ancient Great Wall, many stations on the line have the character "pu" in their names, such as Julepu, Xiaxiaopu, Yongjiapu, Xiwanpu and Chaigoupu, indicating that a fortress used to be there. Xiaofeng then explained that when a series of fortresses were built to form a complete defence system, the state could station a small number of soldiers in each fortress and still guard a large part of its territory. Some fortresses had soldiers assigned to them in emergency situations only.

Tianzhen's railway station is three kilometres from the county seat. Mr. Du, from the county's Cultural Centre, had arranged for a car to pick us up. After stowing the belongings which could stand freezing weather in the trunk, we climbed into the car with cameras in hand. Xiao Wang, the young driver, turned up the heater as we headed down a rural road to State Highway 108.

Origin of the Beacon Towers

A ridge north of the railway, called Heishiya (Black Stone Cliff), looked like a sturdy wall as we drove past it. From Wayaokou on, the road turned uphill and tapering beacon towers appeared at the roadside, one after another.

Fenghuotai, or beacon towers, literally meaning fire-and-smoke-terraces, were usually built near the Great Wall, though some were constructed further up in the highlands or on hilltops. The towers were lined up to form a row extending to a regional army headquarters or even to the capital. In ancient times, if there was a daytime emergency, smoke, called *sui*, was released from these beacon towers; at night, a fire was set, called *feng*. Because wolf droppings were often used to produce more smoke, a beacon tower was also called a "wolf-smoke



terrace". When a beacon fire was lit at night, sulphur and nitre were added to it and gunshots were fired as well. During the Chenghua reign of the Ming Dynasty, if attacking enemy soldiers numbered about 100, one smoke signal would be sent up and one gunshot fired; if there were 500, soldiers sent out two smoke signals and fired two gunshots, and so on up to five shots for 10,000. Thus, a military signal could be seen thousands of kilometres away within hours.

During strong winds or heavy rain which made sending a signal by smoke or fire difficult, red lanterns were hung from high poles erected on the beacon towers. The number of lanterns, of course, represented the number of enemy soldiers. This communication method may seem cumbersome in today's technological world, but it functioned well some 400 years ago. Along the Great Wall from Xuanhua in Hebei Province to Datong in Shanxi Province, there were as many as 363 beacon towers within a 500-km section.

Baoping (Peace-Defending) Fortress

Snow on the road made driving difficult and there were dangerous situations on several occasions. After driving out of the mountain pass, we reached Boqiwa and our view suddenly broadened. Mr. Du said that this was our first destination — Baopingpu, or Peace-Defending Fortress.

We parked at the foot of the mountain. As we got out of the car, we were immediately hit by a strong gust swirling with snowflakes. We all shivered, unaccustomed to the cold. I guessed that the temperature was as low as -30°C.

On top of the mountain, several beacon towers stood along the trail leading to Baopingpu. Each as straight as a column, they formed a protective line outside the ancient Baoping Fortress.

The fortress was square, six or seven metres high, and followed the contours of the mountain. The villagers had long since moved away, leaving debris spread about the fields. Occasionally, a millstone could be found. When I stepped onto the column at the northeastern corner, I felt extraordinarily happy.

The sun was setting, creating a peculiar scene. Sunbeams shot out from behind the clouds and dyed the ruins of the ancient fortress and the Great Wall golden. I began taking photos from the column, but it was hard to steady myself. My tripod was useless. The wind was so powerful that, again and again, it blew the camera bag strapped to my back around to my front. I realised then why the local farmers had left this barren land — its harsh environment is indeed unsuitable for human life.

Xinping (New Peace) Fortress

After coming down from Baoping Fortress, we walked one

Previous page: The Great Wall winds through the mountains and flatland of Shanxi.

1. Many farmers have built their houses on the ruins of the Great Wall.

2. The Jade Emperor's Tower has openings on four sides leading out to the streets.

3. The ruins of Baoping Fortress.

kilometre to reach Xinping Fortress, another ancient battlement. The fortress included defence facilities and 5,600 soldiers were stationed there during the early Ming Dynasty. Together with the Yongjia Fortress in the rear valley, it defended the bottleneck here. More than 2,000 households make up the town called Xinpingpu. The fortress, after years of erosion, was left in ruins. In addition to the southern and northern city gates, Yuhuangge, or the Jade Emperor's Tower, an elegant, classic building in the centre of town, had also safely survived wars and chaos. It looked as magnificent as ever.

After dinner, we retired to a small inn. In fact, the inn was where the horse-drawn carts and their drivers lodged. Automobiles and empty carts were parked in its courtyard, indicating that most of the guests were either drivers or horsemen. We were quite satisfied with the place since we were dog tired after the long day's journey. We checked the stove and its chimney and, before long, fell soundly asleep on the heated brick beds.

1

The Jade Emperor's Tower

The Jade Emperor's Tower, the tallest building in town, rises three storeys high and has up-turned eaves. Its ground floor is a passageway opening out onto streets running east, west, north and south, in a type of city plan rarely seen today.

Mr. Li from the township's Cultural Centre opened the small door for me and I ascended a wooden staircase to the top of the tower. There I had a panoramic view of Xinping Fortress and the Great Wall. When I looked down, I saw a large group of villagers, men and women, old and young, crowded around the east entrance of the town, ready to go somewhere. Everyone was well wrapped in thick warm clothes.

Xinpingpu is a famous rural market. It was 8 a.m. and the shops were just opening, while numerous stands appeared out of nowhere, filling up the road, selling meat, clothing and many other commodities.

2

Pingyuantou (End of Flatland) Fortress

In the northeast of Xinpingpu lies a ridge. The Great Wall, having passed the Baoping and Xinping fortresses, crosses the lower flatland and extends along the foot of the ridge to reach Pingyuantou in the east. Fifteen kilometres from Xinpingpu, Pingyuantou is located at the junction of three provinces — Shanxi, Hebei and Inner Mongolia — and is a place where "a rooster's cry can be heard in three provinces".

As we drove along the bumpy earthen road at the foot of the Great Wall, we passed Dayingpan (Big Barrack). Its name indicates its past function; now it is the township seat. The ruins of the ancient theatre still exist, but the old city wall can scarcely be traced. Local people say a section of the wall used to stand by the Dayang River but it was destroyed in a flood a few years ago.

We passed several villages, all nestled by the Great Wall, separated from one another by varying distances. Their names — Twentieth Tower, Sixteenth Tower or Eighth Tower — represent the beacon towers around which these villages were built. Interestingly, many farmers have used the Great Wall as walls for their houses and some have even made beacon towers their dwelling caves.

Ancient people built many types of earthen towers for different military purposes. Apart from those for sending signals, there were terraced walls for patrolling soldiers, towers for firing on the enemy, and towers used for storage during a war.

It was 3 p.m. when we finally arrived at Pingyuantou. The village was quiet. We stopped at a junction of three roads. A farmer and his two daughters approached in a donkey-drawn cart. They had been visiting relatives in Inner Mongolia and were on their way back home to a village in Hebei. During their journey, they travelled only several kilometres but they passed through three provinces. The man kindly gave us his address and loudly invited us: "Please visit us in Hebei. You'll be welcomed by my family." Then they rode on towards State Highway 108.

Shoukou (Pass-Guarding) Fortress

As Yanggao was just one railway station away from Tianzhen and it had just snowed, we chose to go there by train for safety's sake.

At the county town of Yanggao, we hired a Xiali car for 100 yuan. We planned to visit Shoukou Fortress first and then drive northward on the Fengzhen-Yanggao Highway to see the "Five Fortresses on the Northern Border Wall".

The village of Shoukoupu is situated on a saddle between two ridges. Because there is a spring gushing water year round here, this village is the most prosperous in the area. The village's Party secretary described Shoukoupu as "a village of flowers in spring". It is true that during May and June, various flowers, including peach, apricot, plum and pear, blossom in turn, decorating the Great Wall in dazzling colours. The beautiful scenery has drawn outside attention. Many archeologists and journalists have visited the village in recent years.

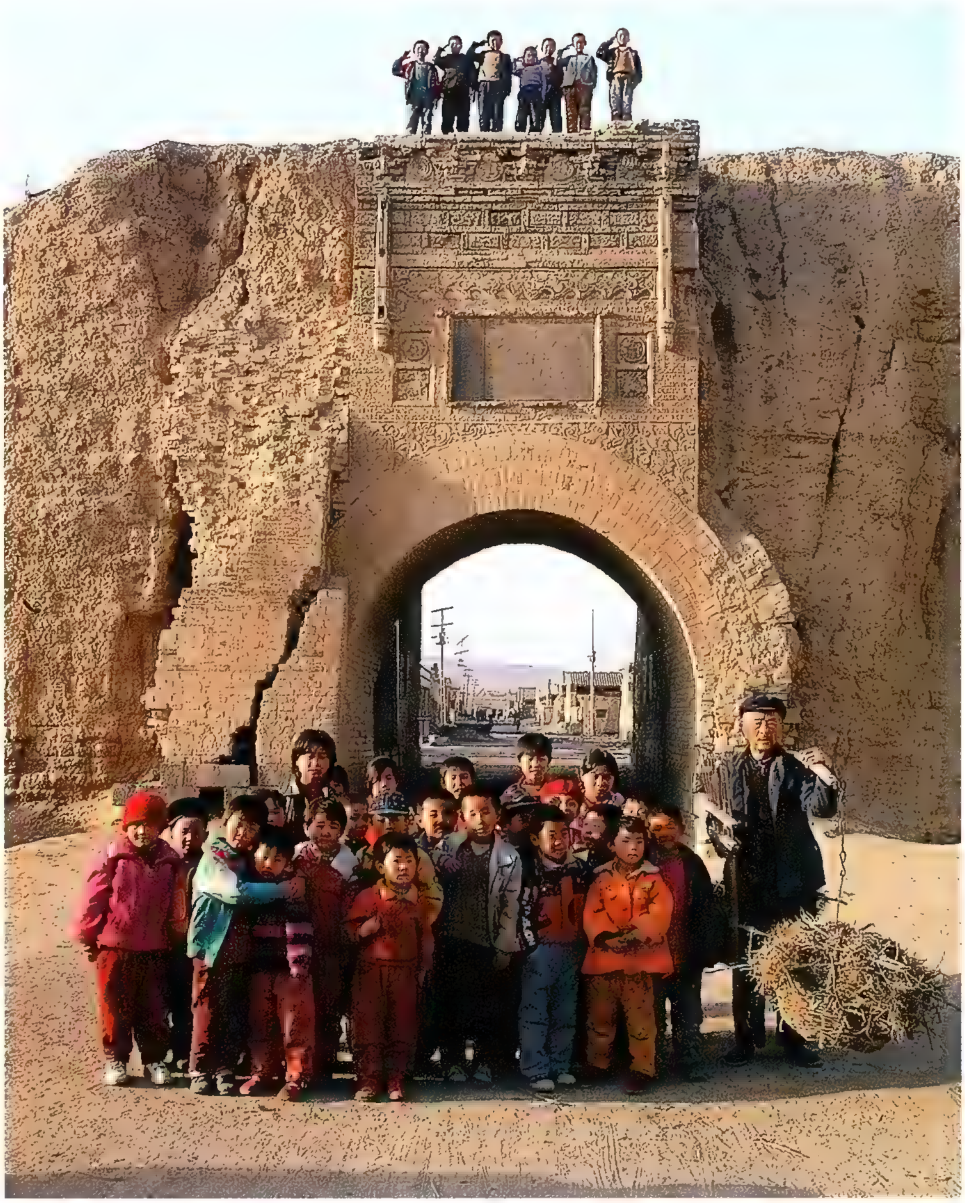
Five Border-Wall Fortresses

After eating lunch at Shoukoupu, we continued west on the same road. Passing a gap in the Great Wall, we arrived in Inner Mongolia. On the frozen river lying between the wall and the highway, children were playing on the ice with their homemade sledges. We soon reached the Twenty-sixth Tower where the government of Changcheng (Great Wall) Township is situated.

Here the Great Wall winds down from the high ridges in the east and begins to occupy the open land between two mountains. On the outer side of the Great Wall, protective towers have been built at regular intervals.

According to historical records, this section of the Great Wall, running 335 km from Zhenkoutai in Tianzhen County in the east to Yajiao Mountain in Pianguan, was built in the Ming Dynasty and went

1. **Children on a sledge on the frozen river.**
2. **A village in the area bordering the three provinces of Shanxi, Hebei and Inner Mongolia.**
3. **Herdsmen grazing sheep at the foot of the "Five Fortresses on the Border Wall".**



through eight subsequent renovations, as fortresses and terraces were added on and the wall as a whole was strengthened. History books stipulate that the building of the Great Wall had to include terraces from which the soldiers could launch lateral attacks on the enemy. These terraces had to shelter the soldiers. In places near cities, fortresses where soldiers could rest and hide had to be constructed with covert gates built along the city walls for soldiers to patrol.

The Anda Tribe of the Mongols began to assault the Central Plains during the Zhengtong reign of the Ming Dynasty. The situation became increasingly serious in the Datong area during the Jiajing reign. To defend its territory, the Ming court built five fortresses on the Great Wall extending 50 km in length in the area north of Datong.

The Ming army won a battle northwest of Zhenhe Fortress and later built a fortress at the battle site, naming it Polu, meaning "beating the invading barbarians". It was one of the nicest such fortresses constructed west of the five, known as "Nine Fortresses for Killing the Barbarian Invaders". The name of Polu Fortress was given different characters after peace and trade were restored on the border area between the Hans and the Mongols.

On the inner side of the Great Wall, huge fortresses have been built every 12.5km, called Zhenbian, Zhenchuan, Hongci, Zhenlu and Zhenhe, respectively. Every local resident we met on the way knew the proverb: "Fortress links fortress, separated only by 12.5 kilometres."

On Pingshan Hill, several kilometres southeast of Hongci Fortress, there is the small Huiyuan Fortress, which offers a panoramic view of the Five Fortresses on the Northern Border Wall. This was the commanding fortress from where orders were given to soldiers in other fortresses. Beside the main structure stands a tower built for officers and soldiers on guard.

Aside from fortresses, the people in the border area also built numerous temples, in which they prayed for peace and good harvest. Unfortunately, none of these survived the disastrous "cultural revolution" (1966-1976).

We returned to Datong via Zhenchuankou to take a few days' break before continuing west to visit the inner Great Wall.

Desheng (Victory) Fortress

Xiaofeng and I resumed our journey on April 18. We took a train to Fengzhen in Inner Mongolia. From there, we rode a motorcycle to Desheng Fortress.

Historical records show that the area around Datong suffered repeated wars in ancient times. As early as the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C), King Wu of the Zhao State attacked the Linhu and Louding tribes to expand his territory. The Han-dynasty court launched expeditions against the Huns, as did the Northern Wei rulers. The imperial troops of the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) battled with the Tujue and again, in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the court had to send its troops to fight the invading Liao armies. The Song soldiers always went through Victory Pass en route to their battles.

Out of Victory Pass, we saw Victory Fortress snug against the Great Wall and a flat-topped hill. One kilometre south sits another fortress, around which a fortress called Desheng Mashi (Victory Horse Market) has developed; yet another smaller fortress, Zhenqiang, lies one kilometre to the east. It was amazing to find three ancient fortresses so close together.

Desheng Fortress was built during the reign of Jiajing of the Ming Dynasty. Its southern city gate and tower are still extant with people passing through them daily. The bricks over the gate display the characters "Bao Zhang", meaning "a protective block", evidence of the fortress' former military significance. On the site of the old fortress, many residences have been built and the place is alive with human activity.

Apart from the ruins, Desheng Fortress also left a cultural legacy — Desheng Percussion Music. This style of music originated in the drum and gong performances by the local people as soldiers left for or returned from battle. By the reign of Qing-dynasty Emperor Kangxi, it had developed into a special music played at ceremonies to celebrate festivals, good harvests or the opening of a new business.

2

Meanwhile, Desheng Mashi's city walls remain perfectly intact, but the fortress is empty. In 1570 during the Longqing reign of the Ming Dynasty, Bahan Naji, grandson of Anda, chieftain of the Dadan tribe, fled to Datong with his wife and was welcomed warmly by the local governor. Anda was so deeply moved that he expressed his willingness to pledge obedience to the Ming court. Emperor Muzong accepted his goodwill and granted him the title of Prince Shunyi. A border trade agreement was signed and Desheng Mashi became a major market between the Han Chinese and the Mongols. The area remained peaceful for 60 years while people on both sides of the border traded for necessities: tea, silk and grains from the Central Plains for horses, cows, sheep and fur from the Mongol tribes.

Shahukou

On May 28, a day when sandstorms threatened, Xiaofeng and I went to Shahukou, hoping the weather would improve.

When we arrived at the Datong Long-distance Bus Station at 7 a.m., however, the two scheduled buses to Hohhot via Shahukou had already left. We changed our plans by going to Yungang to see Zhuma Fortress first, from where we could take a bus to the county town of Youyu and then change to another bus for Shahukou.

3

The brand new highway assured a smooth drive and we arrived at the world-famous Yungang Grottoes 20 minutes later. The 53 existing caves on the southern slope of Wuzhou Mountain house 51,000 Buddhist sculptures. Most of the grottoes were built during peacetime (460-494) in the Northern Wei Dynasty before its capital was moved to Luoyang, but the carving of the statues continued long after the move.

Incredibly, Zhuma Fortress is built on the ridge towering above the grottoes, which means that it is standing "on the head" of Buddha. It is one of the best-preserved ancient fortresses in the Datong area. Built from rammed earth, it looks as if it were a component of the Yungang Grottoes.

After taking some pictures, we took a truck going westward to Shahukou. The Cangtou River runs along the west side of the highway. Shahukou, or Tiger-Killing Pass, is an impressive mountain pass with naturally favourable topography. The mountains of Tutangzi, Dabao, Leigong and Miaotou rise up on its east, west and north sides, respectively, while the Great Wall, winding from the east to the

1. The southern gate of Desheng Fortress — still an entrance to the village.
2. The well-preserved city walls of Old Guangwu Fortress.
3. The ruins of Zhuma Fortress standing atop the Yungang Grottoes.

southwest, forms a semicircle around the pass.

Shahukou had different names in the past, such as Canhekou in remote ancient times, Niangziguan in the Tang Dynasty and Langyaguan in the Song. In later years, since troops always went through this pass to fight the invading Waci tribe who, like other minority ethnic groups, were referred to as "Hu" by the Han Chinese, it was renamed Shahukou, meaning "killing the hu". When a truce was obtained and border trade developed with the opening of markets at the fortresses, the pass name changed again. Though it sounds the same, the current name literally means "killing the tiger", instead of the Hu. For a time, the pass served as an important international market with clusters of flourishing shops and businesses.

The Old and New Fortresses

We walked through Shahukou New Village and reached the two fortresses on a slope east of the village. One of the fortresses was built during the Jiajing reign and the other in 1617 during the Wanli reign of the Ming Dynasty. The twin battlements, in addition to the Great Wall, formed an unbreakable, easily guarded defensive line. The land inside the old fortress has been cultivated into fields, and the villagers residing in the new fortress are mostly elderly. At the new fortress' northern gate stood a platform where the frontier soldiers had watched operas during otherwise bleak evenings. Now twigs were piled upon it and children played there, waving the twigs as weapons, pretending to be martial arts heroes in some TV show.

Then we visited a folk artist who lives in a cave house at the foot of the city wall. She took a lot of her paper-cuttings out of a huge red trunk and spread them on the brick bed. She also demonstrated her skill by quickly cutting out several different designs for us. On hearing our praise, she smiled happily and pointed at her granddaughter sitting beside her, saying, "I became skilled at paper-cutting when I was 17 or 18."

In some classic poems, Yanmenguan is described as a cultural desert. But here, in an ordinary cave house, we saw such wonderful paper-cuttings.

A Fortress for Military Storage

On the morning of June 2, Xiaofeng and I set off for Guangwu and Yanmenguan situated along the inner Great Wall.

Shuozhou was called Mayi in ancient times and it controlled the guard posts at the Yanmenguan, Wuningguan and Pianguan passes. Many famous historical battles were fought here. Now, with a well-developed coal mining industry, the old town has been revitalised and has many tall buildings.

There are two military storage fortresses in Guangwu. The older one is the largest and best preserved of all the ancient fortresses we visited on this trip, and the newer one, is next best after Pingyao in Shanxi Province. The newer fortress has two sections, one on a mountain slope, the other on the flatland. Behind it we saw magnificent Gaozhu Mountain capped with snow.

King Wuling of the Zhao State during the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.) constructed a battlement on Gouzhu Mountain which eventually became Guangwu Fortress. During the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), Guangwu Town was a state gateway open to the south, which emperors on southern expeditions, returning generals and visiting foreigners all passed through. It was both a military establishment and a prosperous town.

Old Guangwu Fortress was built in the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 24) and renovated during the reign of Emperor Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). New Guangwu Fortress was built in the early Ming Dynasty. Situated at the pass leading from east to west on Gouzhu Mountain, it controlled 18 surrounding passes. In each dynasty throughout Chinese history, the court kept its military forces here.

It took us an hour to walk in a circle around Old Guangwu Fortress. When we reached the southern city wall, we saw an ancient Chinese scholar tree growing there, its thick trunk wrapped in red cloth. A passer-by said that the tree is worshipped as a god who can bring peace and safety to the local people.

We walked out of the southern gate to reach New Guangwu Fortress. Many houses in the village were built from bricks taken from the city wall, which was heartbreaking to see. In the village centre was an old well from which some farmers were letting their horses drink.

Beside the northern gate stood a terrace from where ancient generals had once commanded their armies. A fallen stone tablet had become a slide on which children played. Its surface was worn to a sheen.

Yanmenguan Fortress

We drove on an asphalt road which branched off of the Taiyuan-Datong Highway to Yanmenguan (Goose Gate Pass). After cresting a ridge, we saw that the mountains on both sides of the highway dramatically rose in height, forming a funnel-shaped mountain pass. A two-storey gate tower appeared on a cliff, like a giant bird ready to fly away at any moment.

The characters carved on the stone plates fixed to the city wall's two gates were "Tian Xian" (Heavenly Block) and "Di Li" (Favourable Topography), respectively. A couplet on one of the gates read: "A unique battlement of three passes; An unmatchable barricade to nine fortresses."

The ruins of the original Yanmenguan discovered in 1993 proved that the pass fortress was first established in the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) more than 2,000 years ago. During the ensuing centuries of Chinese history, at least 20 wars were launched in this area, testament to its strategic importance.

Most of the city wall around Yanmenguan Fortress has toppled. The gate tower, however, retains its significance although the paint on its walls has faded. There used to be several spots of historical interest in the surrounding area, but none of them exists today. The only remaining cultural relics include a dozen or so carved stone tablets, a pair of flagpoles, stone lions, sections of balustrade and a stone-paved path.

One of General Yang Ye of the Northern Han victorious battles against the Qidan was fought at Yanmenguan. In the year 986 of the Song Dynasty, when the court sent its troops on a northern expedition, he led his men in a heroic fight and recovered a large area of the Song territory in northern Shanxi. He was captured by the enemy during a withdrawal, put himself on a hunger strike and died in custody. His story is the background for the popular novel, *Generals of the Yang Family*.

Yanmenguan is 1,600 metres above sea level. The valley, sandwiched between two high mountains, forms a natural path for wild geese to follow during migration, according to the classic geography work, *Records of Mountains and Seas*. Hence, the place name.

Yanmenguan Fortress has left a deep impression on me. I hope someday I, too, can watch the troops of the wild geese flying past. ⊂

Translated by Jin Jianzhong

1.The Gate Tower of Yanmenguan
2.Ruins of the Great Wall have magneted photo buffs.

Tips for the Traveller

Transport

Fly to Beijing, then take one of two trains running daily to Datong. The journey takes five hours and 20 minutes. Or board a train from Beijing to Lanzhou and disembark at Datong.

Sightseeing Routes

1. Take a train from the Datong Railway Station to Tianzhen, then hire a car to Baoping Fortress, Xinping Fortress (with hostel), Dayingpan, and Pingyuantou before returning to Tianzhen, Gaoyang or Datong.
2. Hire a car from Datong to Zhenchuan in the northern suburbs; drive along the Fengzhen-Yanggao Highway to visit Zhenchuankou, Zhenbian Fortress, Changcheng Township (with hostels) and Shoukou Fortress, then return to Datong via Yanggao.
3. Take a train or bus to Fengzhen (about 40 min.), then hire a vehicle to drive 20 minutes to see Desheng, Zhenqiang and Juqiang fortresses. A motorcycle (30 yuan) best negotiates the narrow rural roads.
4. Ride a bus from Datong to Shahukou (2 hrs.). The bus leaves Datong for Hohhot in the morning. You may also take a bus from Datong to Liangjia Youfang, where you can hire a car or a three-wheeled motorcar to Shahukou. Hostels are available, or you can take a long-distance bus back to Datong in the afternoon.
5. To visit the Old and New Guangwu fortresses, the Han-dynasty tombs in Guangwu and Yanmenguan, travel from Datong to Shuozhou by train or bus (2-1/2 hrs.). Taxis are available at Shuozhou. While there are many hostels in Guangwu, it is possible to return to Datong the same day.

Some of the trains from Beijing to Datong stop at Tianzhen or Yanggao. A Xiali car runs around 300 yuan/day and a 20-seat minibus costs 600 yuan/day.

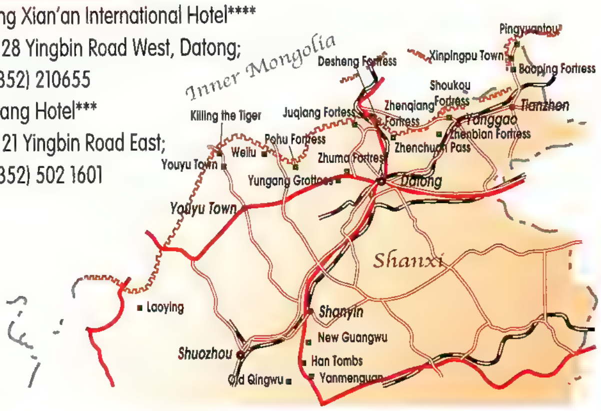
*Contact Datong International Travel Service for group tours: Tel: (352) 510 0477.

Food

The Railway Station has more than a dozen restaurants serving typical local food. Lamb hotpot is widely available and costs less than 20 yuan per person.

Accommodation

Datong Xian'an International Hotel****
Add: 28 Yingbin Road West, Datong;
Tel: (352) 210655
Yungang Hotel***
Add: 21 Yingbin Road East;
Tel: (352) 502 1601



DRIVING A CAR TO VISIT YINCHUAN

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong

1

Yinchuan, capital city of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, is located at the foot of the Helan Mountains. I decided to tour Yinchuan by driving a car myself because a poem by Yue Fei, a Song-dynasty general who fought against the invaders, had left a deep impression on me. One line of it reads: "Driving the long cart, I stepped through the Helan Mountains..."

I was staying with my friend Wang Zheng who was going to lend me his car. However, I was not a skilled driver and had not touched the wheel for two years.

As it had been a long time since we last saw one another, we talked late into the night. Before we turned in, I got up my courage and told him I would drive to the Western Xia Mausoleum alone the next day.

A Car Without Reverse?

I woke up at daybreak. After finding something to eat in the Wang family's refrigerator, I slipped down the stairs, trying not to disturb the others. I examined the car carefully and found it was a popular type of Sangtana, nearly new. I had never driven such a car, though. I climbed into the driver's seat and prepared to back the car out of the narrow lane. Strangely, the car could only go forward whatever gear I switched to.

I was sweating. I called the owner using my cell phone. "How come your car does not have a reverse gear?" A laugh came from the other end of the line. "You wait. I'll be there in a moment," he said. I sat and waited with shame. With Wang's instruction, I learnt to press the gear lever down hard to make the car go backwards. Wang said he should go with me in case I needed road directions. Plus there was heavy fog, reducing visibility to only a dozen metres. If he had not come, I would have definitely lost my way.

The Ancestors Must Be Laughing at Me

The mysterious Western Xia Mausoleum is an invaluable cultural relic and the crown of Ningxia's tourist attractions.

We visited Tomb No. 3 first, the final resting place of Li Yuanhao, founding emperor of the Western Xia Kingdom. As it is located near the highway, most of the visitors start their tour of the mausoleum here. The newly built museum, however, looked much more magnificent than the tomb. Wang suggested that I go further on to visit tombs No. 1 and No. 2, where the emperor's ancestors, Li Jiqian and Li Deming were buried. He offered to stay and watch the car. I walked forward. The wasteland was uneven, with cobblestones here and deep ruts there. I walked about three kilometres in the wilderness. There was no one around and I heard nothing but the wind. The two huge pyramids stood there quiet and lonely. The grazing sheep herds searching for food in the barren fields increased the sense of vastness and remoteness of this land. It was just how I had imagined.

1. **A scene inside the West Land Film and TV City.**
2. **Tomb No. 3 of the Western Xia Mausoleum attracts more visitors than other tombs.**
3. **The newly built Ningxia Museum.**
4. **Entrance to the valley of cliff carvings in the Helan Mountains.**

The two tombs were encircled by an iron fence. I wanted to get inside to take photos, but could not find an entrance. Looking around, I determined that I was alone. I hesitated and then climbed over. As I got ready to leave, I saw that there was a house behind the tombs, with people inside. Would they take me for a tomb raider? I hastened to the fence, but when I tried to climb back over it, I failed to do as well as before and my jeans were slashed in a long tear. The ancestors who had been resting for so long must have laughed when they saw this.

Haier
海尔热水器
1

Graffiti on the Wall

In the afternoon, we visited Chengtian Tower. The old man sitting by the gate was kind. After punching a hole in my ticket, he said: "There is no hurry; go up slowly. There are windows only on the floors above the third one. Please don't smoke, don't carve or draw anything...." I nodded and ascended the spiral stairway.

"Zhengtian Tower was built between 1050 and 1055. In the 1970s, it was designated to house the regional museum. The current tower, an 11-storey brick structure, was rebuilt in 1820, the 25th year of the Jiaqing reign of the Qing Dynasty." I read the brief introduction printed on the back of the ticket. I am used to taking lifts and seldom use stairs to go higher than four storeys. Now I had to walk up for 61 metres, the equivalent of climbing 20 floors. The wooden staircase creaked under my feet. The higher I climbed, the narrower the space became. Just as it became barely wide enough for me to squeeze through, the staircase ended and I was on the top floor. There were windows looking out on all four directions, providing a panoramic view of Yinchuan.

2

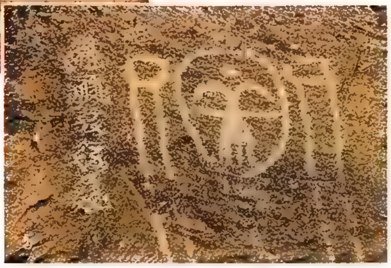
The interior walls of the ancient tower showed signs of "modern culture". Tourists had written on every inch of the walls; somebody visited here on a certain day, etc. There were also some rubbish love poems. Even worse, people had scribbled "don't write here", "why did you write here" and "while criticising others, you're doing the same thing". The wall was littered with graffiti.

I remembered what the old man had said at the entrance. He had been doing his duty, but how could he stop these ignorant people? Could he follow everyone up to the top floor?

Driving Through the City

Regarding the city's name, Yinchuan, which literally means "silver land", one explanation is that it used to be a silver production centre. True or not, you see no silver in the streets today. I decided to visit the Drum Tower. A landmark of Yinchuan, construction of the tower began in 1821 but was not completed until 1917 due to a lack of funds. At the opening ceremony, the governor of Ningxia, Yu Dingming, was so excited that tears rolled down his beard.

I set off in the morning and, after stopping twice to ask for directions, I found the Drum Tower. I drove around the tower before



parking the car. When I walked towards the people doing morning exercises there, they all smiled at me. The people of Yinchuan were friendly and did not mind being photographed. A few senior citizens were very cooperative. They carried on with their routine and made sure that their movements were perfect.

Not far from the Drum Tower was a morning market, from where the aroma of cooked lamb and beef drifted over. I found a small restaurant in which to have breakfast; a bowl of beef noodles cost only 1.5 yuan. Then I walked to the pedestrian zone which was a surprise. I did not expect to see such a modern street in a city like Yinchuan. The street was broad and the shops were doing a prosperous business. Furthermore, with National Day approaching, it was colourfully decorated.

The Yinchuan I had always heard of was a small town which "has only one street with one policeman watching both ends; in the only park there are just two monkeys..." What I saw now was totally different. The streets were clean and neat. Its buildings were of a simple architectural style, without exaggerated characteristics. As it was not highly populated, the city was not as crowded and noisy as other big cities. I realised why my friend, a talented young man, was reluctant to leave and make his fortune elsewhere.

The Helan Mountains, at Last

Finally, on the day before I left Yinchuan, I visited the Helan Mountains. Wang Zheng was busy, so he found a local friend of his to be my companion.

We followed State Highway 202 and then changed to the road winding up the mountain. There was very little traffic and the road was even and smooth. I opened the window and found the wind was strong. Listening to the sound of our car speeding into the wind, I imagined how Yue Fei, the Song-dynasty warrior, rode his horse, sweeping the Liao invaders away and recovering the Helan Mountains. It was not surprising that he wrote great poems in such an environment.

A forest park had been built at Suyukou, one of the passes to the Helan Mountains. It is a grand place of greenery. Inside the park, there are cultural relics such as the Twin Towers at Baisikou, Lingguang Tower, Wangyue (Moon Watching) Pavilion and Sanguankou. As my time was limited, I chose to see the cliff carvings. We parked the car at the entrance and followed a creek to the mountain path. After walking awhile along a trail strewn with

1. **The pedestrian street of Yinchuan is decorated for National Day.**
2. **A worker hammering chopsticks into the earthen mound of a Western Xia tomb to slow its erosion.**
3. **Zhentian Tower rising high in downtown Yinchuan.**
4. **Ruins of a makeshift furnace built in Zhenbeipu during the late 1950s.**
5. **A cliff carving left by the Western Xia people.**
6. **The vast wasteland surrounding tombs No. 2 and No. 3 of the Western Xia Mausoleum.**

huge cobbles, we saw pictures carved on the cliffs on either side. Some depict images of humans or ghosts; others feature animals, such as oxen, sheep, horses and dogs. There are also unrecognisable characters, probably of the Western Xia language, among these pictures. Because these art works were created so long ago, most have become indistinct with time and are hard to see if you don't look carefully. One is particularly eye-catching, though. Carved on the steep cliff side are lines representing beams of light radiating from a human head. It is the Sun God of the ancient people.

The Wisdom of Zhang Xianliang

On our way back to Yinchuan, we made a stop at Zhenbeipu. I now remembered that it was where Wang Zheng, my friend and the owner of the car, started his career as a photographer. Two decades before, he took many black-and-white pictures of this landscape which were creative but strange in a certain way. Those photos made him famous in the photographers' circle.

Zhenbeipu, literally meaning "fortress for pacifying the north", was a barrack base built in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Though its remote location saved it from the war, it has been seriously eroded by an earthquake and the elements over the years. It was Zhang Xianliang, a famous contemporary writer, who revitalised it. By transforming it into a film site, he has helped promote several Chinese films worldwide. Among the most acclaimed are *The Horseman, Red Sorghum, Melody of the Yellow River, and The Vicious of the East and the West.* The use of Ningxia as a backdrop was a factor in their success. *Red Sorghum* directed by Zhang Yimou is one such example. Zhenbeipu has become increasingly renowned as a result. Zhang Yimou was very confident about *Red Sorghum*. When he left Zhenbeipu after filming the outdoor scenes there, he buried a pair of his shoes in the ground and swore that if this film was not a great success, he would give up his career as a filmmaker. After the film site was formally established, Zhang Xianliang dug up the shoes under the guidance of a person with some inside information.

I had thought that the film studio had been developed with a huge amount of funding. After roaming through it, I found that was not the case. Most of the attractions on the site were built by film

companies as needed for certain scenes and left behind as free gifts. These include the wine workshop and the grandma's house appearing in *Red Sorghum* and the Blacksmith Village used in *Melody of the Yellow River* and again as the site of a fierce fight in *Romantic Journey to the West*. A Middle Eastern building was erected for *Pluto in Action*. A rural stage typical of northern Chinese villages has featured in a dozen films. The Moon Gate, which appears in *Red Sorghum* as one of the most impressive scenes, is now the studio's landmark. In addition to Zhenbeipu, there is also Zhennanpu, where a Film and TV Street has been developed with funds pooled from artists in this circle.

In the development of tourism, sometimes creative ideas are more important than money.

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Meeting with Zhang Xianliang

I was so moved by the studio that I wanted to meet Zhang Xianliang, its developer, very much. His assistant said Mr. Zhang would see me but could allow only 10 minutes.

I saw the famous writer, who is also a businessman involved in the culture industry, in his office with its classical-styled furniture. As time was limited, I did not launch into flattery, but raised a few questions about how to retain a nation's cultural traditions while striving for social progress. Zhang's answer reflected his great wisdom, and he cited Zhenbeipu as an example. When he first decided to develop the film studio, he invited some experts to discuss the matter. Someone suggested that they build a Western Xia City. They made the final decision to leave as much of the barren land as possible. This was like offering a painter a piece of plain Xuan paper, on which the artist can give full play to his or her talent and imagination.

He also told me that after visiting many historical sites across the world, he found that in developed countries, a cultural relic is rarely rebuilt, even if it is considered the pride of the culture. Instead, relics are protected with modern techniques. When I joked that he was doing a good business by "selling the wilderness", he said this was not true. His business did not involve real "wilderness" but something with cultural polish. Eighty percent of China's territory is barren land and in Ningxia there are many places much more remote than Zhenbeipu, but that does not necessarily mean they can be used in such a venture.

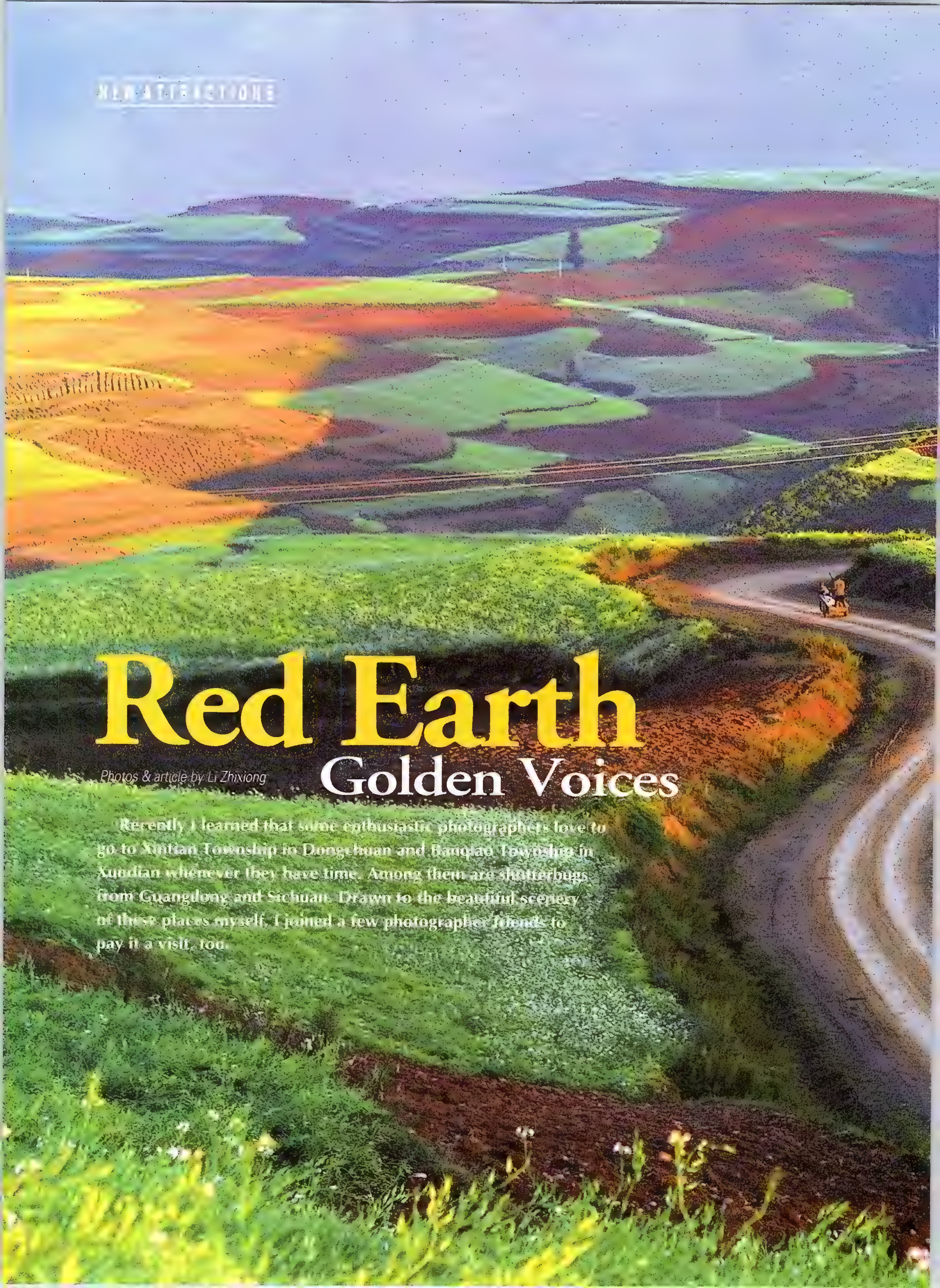
Our talk lasted for over an hour. In the end, I invited him to the Biancheng Fortress in Zhennanpu so that I could take pictures of him.

After leaving the film city, I offered the wheel to my companion. All along the way, my mind was fully occupied by the topics I had discussed with Zhang Xianliang. The land we were driving on no longer seemed remote and barren to me.

Tips for the Traveller

- ○ **Transport:** Yinchuan is connected with major Chinese cities by air and rail.
- ○ **Accommodation:**
  - **International Hotel***** Add: 25 Beihuan Road East, Yinchuan; Tel: (951) 672 8688
  - **Ningfeng Hotel**** Add: 236 Jiefang Street East, Yinchuan; Tel: (951) 602 8898
  - **Helanshan Hotel**** 1 Shuofang Road, Yinchuan; Tel: (951) 207 7301
- ○ **Car Rental** Huagang Automobile Rental Co. (Yinxin Road North); 200 yuan per day for a Santana.

1. Zhang Xianliang standing outside the Biancheng Fortress.
2. The bedroom of the Granny in the film Red Sorghum.
3. The Moon Gate that appears in Red Sorghum.
4. This rural theatre has appeared in many films and TV series.
5. A bean curd shop where many stars played their roles.
6. An old-fashion wine shop established at the film site.



Red Earth

Golden Voices

Photos & article by Li Zhixiong

Recently I learned that some enthusiastic photographers love to go to Xintian Township in Dongchuan and Banqiao Township in Xundian whenever they have time. Among them are shutterbugs from Guangdong and Sichuan. Drawn to the beautiful scenery of these places myself, I joined a few photographer friends to pay it a visit, too.

Enjoying a Masterpiece

After the bus bumped along the rough country road for more than four hours, the red earth unique to Yunnan Province appeared. The hills rolling past were covered in a patchwork of colourful crops. As the bus climbed higher and higher up the winding mountain road and our field of vision broadened, we marvelled at the vibrant hues and fluid lines of the mountains and valleys which resembled a vast oil painting. We stopped on a hilltop at a village called Huashitou in Xintian Township and the landscape, like the masterpiece of a skilled artist, was unveiled. While white clouds floated in the sky and their shadows shifted on the ground, the picturesque fields stirred different feelings in each of us.

Yang Jiaqiang and his family of four in Huashitou Village farm a total of 1.5 hectares of land scattered about this place. From chatting with him, we learned that most of the fields in this area are over 2,000 metres above sea level. The mountains are high and the weather is cold; the sandy, red soil, full of stones, is not very fertile. As the fields cannot hold water, only some drought-enduring, cold-resistant crops like maize, buckwheat, rape, barley and turnip are grown. Based on the number of people in the family, each household is allotted about one or one and a half hectares of land of different types, so the local villagers have plentiful land to cultivate. Some of the land is so far from their homes that it takes more than two hours to reach. As the allocation of land is meant to give everyone access to varying grades of soil, the field a farmer gets is not in one piece. The result is that in one large area, each farmer grows a different crop in his own plot; one grows potatoes and turnips, another grows maize and rape or simply lets his plot lie fallow or grow hotchpotch. Due to this casual style of farming, the mountain tops and slopes, large and small, display colourful, varied patterns which draw admiring visitors from September to mid-December. From the hilltops, they gaze out at the brilliant fields in a daze, sometimes for an entire day. Some come every weekend and stay all day until sunset.

Listening to Nature

Banqiao Township in Xundian is similar to Xintian Township in Dongchuan in terms of geographical conditions and altitude. The two

places are about 50 km apart. We entered Banqiao Township from the crossroads in Niujie Township, Luquan County, and were greeted by a late autumn scene. Golden poplar leaves glistened in the sunshine; small horse-drawn carts, busy in harvesting crops, ran to and fro in the fields. Like every other place in the area, the dazzling colours of the farmland brightened the mountains and valleys.

Ayaojiao is a Yi village. By following a group of people dressed in their vivid national costume, we entered the village and found everyone dressed in their best clothes. A singing contest to celebrate the year's good harvest was in full swing at the small village square. The place was packed with singing teams of Han, Miao and Black Yi ethnic groups from neighbouring villages, along with Ayaojiao's own White Yi team. There were also many spectators from the surrounding villages.

In a courtyard close to the square, seven or eight large cauldrons sat in a row. This was the makeshift kitchen where a service group were busy preparing meals from the grain, vegetables and meat people had brought from their own villages. The dozen small tables setup in the courtyard were crowded with diners talking and laughing happily. As the place was small and tableware was limited, dining and the singing contest were conducted in turns. When the singers of one village were performing, those of another village went to eat, and so on.

Some of the songs were sung in an ethnic group's native language. We were amazed by a duet and quartet by the Yi and Miao singers. These people were good singers who evoked the harmonious beauty of their homeland with their voices. They sang in a coordinated fashion, in the same way that they cultivated the fields. It was intoxicating. The two amateur singers in our tour group joined the singing contest and soon we all felt immersed in the joyous occasion.

When the last rays of the sun disappeared behind the beautiful mountains of Banqiao Township, we found we were the only group left in the fields, standing in a trance-like state, unconcerned about turning back. Facing into the cold wind and reluctant to leave, we gazed at the red land which gradually grew darker in the retreating daylight.

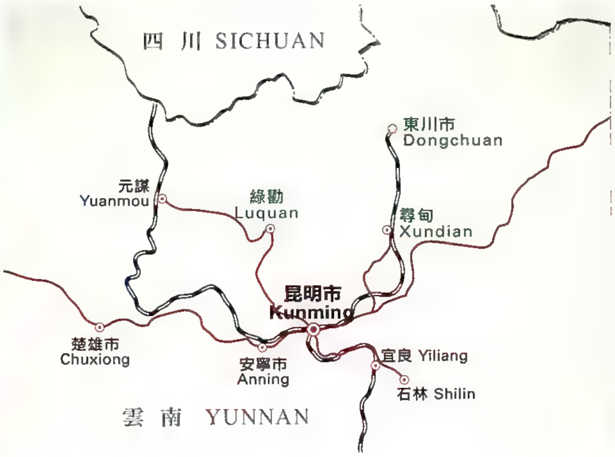
Translated by Xiong Zhenru

Previous page: The picturesque land has many admirers.

1. **Yang Jiaqiang, who supports a family of four, owns one and a half hectares of land.**
2. **Every year at the communal feast to celebrate the harvest, women villagers prepare meals to treat visitors.**
3. **The folk singing contest held during the harvest celebration is as mesmerising as the beautiful red earth.**
4. **Banqiao Township becomes a colourful world in autumn.**

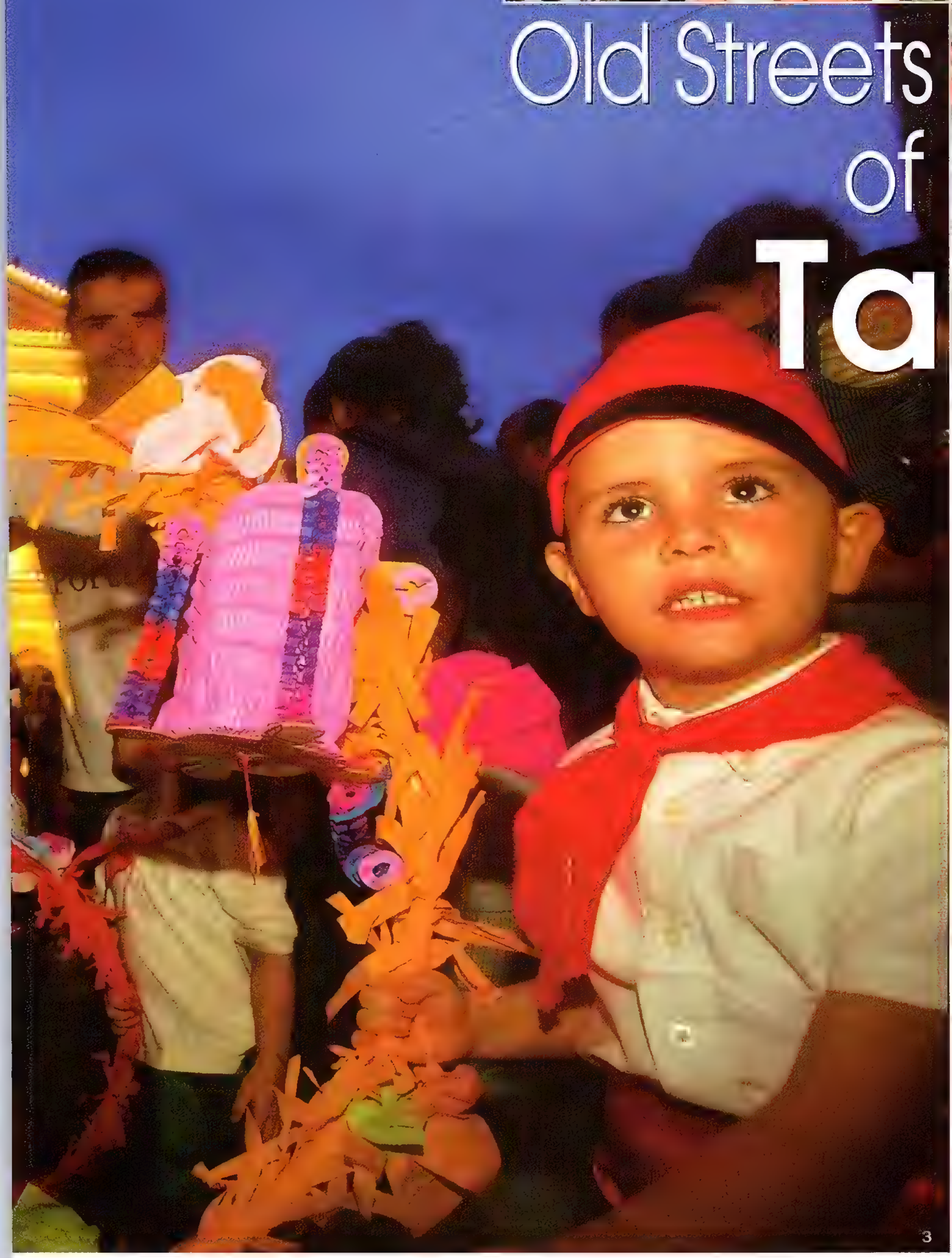
Tips for the Traveller

- **Transport:** Regular buses run from Kunming to Yangjiawan. Visitors can hire a car at Yangjiawan which is six kilometres from Huashitou Village of Xintian Township in Dongchuan. There are also regular buses from Kunming to Banqiao Township in Xundian. In Banqiao, many small horse-drawn carts run to different villages.
- **Accommodation:** Adequate lodgings are available in Niujie, Yangjiawan and Banqiao Township, ranging from 5 to 10 yuan per bed.
- **Food:** Take along some food when climbing in the mountains near Huashitou Village. There are many small, economical restaurants in town.
- **Note:** It is cold on the mountains of Huashitou Village and Banqiao Township, so pack enough warm clothes.



On the Old Streets of Taipa

Photos & article by
Huang Yanhong



1. There are over 10 different Portuguese-speaking nationalities in Macao, each of which has distinct traditions.
2. A Chinese way to worship ancestors in an alleyway.
3. Lovely Portuguese children ready for the performance.

I hadn't been to Macao for a long time, but when I read on the Internet that the Lusophony Festival on Taipa Island was coming up, I decided it was time to go back.

Covering an area of 3.75 sq km, Taipa was previously called Lung Tao Wan. The University of Macao, the horse racing course and Macao International Airport are all located here. In southern Taipa, the Municipal Garden and Star Garden, which reflect strong European tastes, combine with Portuguese residences and Chinese village buildings to create a harmonic and atmospheric environment. One of the eight great views in Macao, the nearby Carmo Site is where the Lusophony Festival is held. Among the Portuguese mansions established here beginning in 1902, one has been renovated into the Taipa House Museum (Avenida da Praia Residences), showcasing the early lives of local Portuguese. Our Lady of Carmel Church is located on a mountain slope near the museum.

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The Old Way Continues

I had been to Taipa before, but my stays were always very brief. Only by taking my time, did I finally discover its true essence. While the exotic isle has not pushed its history-old image in an effort to attract visitors, it welcomes tourists warmly just the same. It is far more relaxing to come here than to visit those celebrated, crowded water-towns or well-established ancient villages with their high admission fees.

Strolling along the ancient streets in the morning, I rapidly became acquainted with the place. So, after ordering breakfast and buying some newspapers, I positioned myself at a table outside one of the restaurants, just as the locals were doing, and listened to some elderly men chatting. Their topics were quite broad: Sino-U.S. relations, the Middle East situation and China's entry to the WTO. Though I wanted to intervene in their discussion a few times, I was afraid that they would ask where this "old guy" had come from.

From consulting a Macao tourist map, I learnt that streets with Portuguese names like Rua Correia da Silva, Rua do Cunha, and Rua do Regedor are located in the Taipa Village Centre. In the 18th and 19th centuries, most ships from Europe had to gain permission from the Qing government to enter Guangzhou. Therefore, the Taipa pier became their stopping off place, allowing them to replenish their supplies while they awaited approval. It was Taipa's most prosperous period.

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Before the establishment of the Republic of China, the flourishing fishing and shipbuilding industries largely stimulated local business development. Nowadays, some shops as old as 100 years and older are still running. Alongside traditional industries such as producing fishing instruments, fishing nets, oyster sauce and shrimp paste, new businesses have developed, including goldsmiths, pawnshops, herbal medicine shops, bakeries and Chinese restaurants, as well as a theatre.

On the seafront, lots of ships used to berth in the area around Rua do Regedor. Because of the sea reclamation project, however, such a scene is only a memory now. Still, history has left its mark in the ancient buildings of Chinese and Western architecture and along the elegant streets and alleyways where inhabitants continue to live peacefully.

The Miss Macau Restaurant

After awhile, I came upon a restaurant owned by four sisters, each of whom had been a Miss Macao in recent years. I first heard about the place when I visited Taipa two years before. To be honest, I went not to have a meal, but to appreciate the beauties. Each of the sisters had dramatically won the title in four successive beauty contests. Unfortunately, none of them were present during my visit. Looking at their photos, I recalled a Chinese phrase describing how even fishes and cranes will be captivated by beauty as lovely as a crescent moon or a budding flower. I don't know if this was an accurate comparison, but the four crowns seemed to confirm that their beauty was widely recognised.

Although I did not meet the four beauties that time, I spoke with their father in English. They were all Macao-born Portuguese. Because his daughters were so busy, he ran the restaurant most of the time.

Now two years later I wondered, would the sisters still be as pretty as before?

It was early in the day yet, but I got the feeling that none of the beauties were likely to appear this time either. Besides, I was not hungry, so I walked on past the restaurant without stopping.

Home of Fireworks

At the entrance of Rua do Cunha, a remarkable metal billboard hangs on the wall. It depicts the making of firecrackers in the 1960s. The famous, former fireworks production district is situated nearby. Despite the arrival of the 21st century, the paintings on the old factory walls endure. In the middle of one wall, part of a mural was obscured by the inadvertant burning of a firecracker many years ago. Such accidents are frequent in China. Although the making of fireworks is now banned in Macao, it is one the few remaining cities where the crackle of burning firecrackers can still be heard.

One of three traditional local industries, firework-making in Macao dates back a few hundred years. A Guinness World Book record was set here in June 1987, when a 3,988-metre-long string of fireworks was lit. From 1:40 p.m. to 8:40 p.m., the 2.78 million firecrackers attached to it exploded in turn. For many years, fireworks have been a highlight of life in Macao. Aside from the international fireworks shows held here, every important festival features fireworks and firecrackers going off throughout the night, earning Macao the name "home of fireworks".

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Cherishing the Old Streets

A left turn off of Rua de Cunha leads to Rua dos Clerigos. As it was so early, the shops were still closed, except for Cherikoff, a famous local bakery. A sign at the entrance announced that the shop produced authentic milk candy (Nougat), cookies and so on.

Passing the Comida Portuguesa restaurant, I turned into a street no wider than two metres. The one- and two-storey residences were neatly painted in comforting pastels of pink, light green and yellow.

In the alleyway, statues of the God of Land and Goddess of Mercy are enshrined. Although exposed to the elements, the

1. A typical house in Macao.
2. Even an alley is tastefully designed.
3. Motorcycles are the most popular means of transport in Macao.
4. A Chinese stone lion in front of a red Portuguese-style door.
5. The father of the four Macao beauties.
6. Macanes in Taipa live peacefully.
7. A 100-year-old European house at the Carmel Site.

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statues have held up well. Pilgrims were already there burning incense at such an early hour.

Soon, the stores on Rua de S. Joao opened one by one. Older residents gathered round the alfresco tables, drinking tea and eating breakfast.

An old-fashioned barber shop, something rarely seen anywhere these days, was open for business in Zhongshan Street. At only MOP$35, the price of a haircut was quite cheap.

As time slipped past, sunlight penetrated the Travessa da Esperanca. The place became more crowded and children played ballgames in the alleys. In front of the spacious, old Tung Kei store situated at the top of the road, an old man reclined on a chair and talked with his wife in a leisurely manner.

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Upon leaving Travessa dos Mercadores, I noticed that the "tai pai dong" eateries were doing well. Table after table was filled, seeming to prove the maxim that more diners increase one's appetite.

In Largo de Camoes, there was a stall renting bicycles. A few Hong Kong children pedalled round while their parents watched. Meanwhile, the statue of Pak Tai (King of the North) watched all of them from the Pak Tai Temple opposite the square on the right. This meeting place was just as busy, though in a different way, as it had been long ago when merchants from various industries came here to worship famous historical figures such as Beidi and Lu Ban. The 150-year-old Beidi Temple was important to village life in old Taipa. Somewhat resembling Guanyin, Beidi was regarded as the God of Protection.

As I left Rua das Virtudes, I saw that a temporary stage had been constructed in Largo Maia de Magalhaes. The locals explained that there would be a Guangdong Opera performance that night.

Interesting Menu Prices

There was yet another food paradise in the Old District. Many Portuguese restaurants, such as the Galo, Panda, and Dumbo restaurants, line the streets. Either a passion for animals or childhood memories seems to have inspired these names. A lot of snack shops are located here as well, and tempting aromas filled the air.

Mo Yi Kei on Rua do Cunha makes wonderful vegetable-based puddings, which are soft but not greasy. After 50 years in business, the shop continues to try new things, adding flavours like chocolate, coconut, etc.

Walking further, the Fong Kei cake shop is found. It has an even longer history, having first opened in the 32nd year of Guangxu's reign during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Sometimes they run out of Baked Coconut Wife Cakes well before closing time.

The nearby Casa De Bolos Man Kei is not to be missed. It produces the "lo po ban" or bride's biskets filled with minced taro and wrapped in appetising, crispy pastry. One can smell them baking from far away.

Deep-fried pork steak on a bun is the specialty item at Tai Lei eatery located in Largo Governador Tamagnini Barbosa. Each piece of tender steak is far larger than the bun holding it. According to the owner, the shop sells over 600 pork steak buns a day.

At the top of Rua do Cunha, I noticed Mercearia Kong Ou Tai Yat Ka, a shop selling dried meat. Most of the tourists crowded inside had come from Hong Kong for a one-day excursion. The shop gladly accepts Renminbi for the convenience of mainland tourists. Meanwhile, the egg roll shop next door was even more popular. One of the most characteristic specialties of Macao, the egg rolls are made with different fillings, such as dried minced meat and laver. You can try a sample before buying one. Since the egg rolls are freshly made to order, the staff in the shop were constantly busy.

At noon, I entered a restaurant just opposite from the egg roll shop. The setting, meal compositions and flavours were similar to those in Hong Kong, but the menu was not. Instead of Arabic numbers, the prices on the menu were written in horizontal and vertical lines like hatch marks. Having no idea what these lines meant, I finally ordered a meal costing two vertical lines, three horizontal lines and one diagonal line, which equalled MOP$28. When I asked the owner about the lines, she said they were an archaic numbering system which all the locals understood.

The Lusophony Festival

When the festival began that evening, the stands on the Avenida da Praia along the coast bustled with noisy spectators. People flocked to the open-air theatre in Carmo Square (Largo do Carmo). Meanwhile, the "Window of the Oceanic Island" photographic exhibition and the Portuguese porcelain arts exhibition held their respective ribbon-cuttings at the festival's commencement.

Now in its fourth year, the Lusophony Festival is a grand annual occasion held in early June. More than 10 Portuguese-speaking nations have participated in past festivals, including Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Goa, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Damman, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and others.

The opening ceremony got off to a jubilant start with lion and dragon dancing, followed by a series of performances. There were song-and-dance pairs from Portugal, a famous singer from Brazil, a band from Cape Verde, hymn singing, choral speaking, dramas in Portuguese, etc. Most splendid of all were the Portuguese students in their elegant, traditional clothing performing native folk dances. They formed a circle and danced happily, making the audience feel happy as well. Macao is typical of a city combining both Eastern and Western life styles. Among its residents, the Macao-born Portuguese generally enjoy a higher social status, having their own schools and social circles. Now this distinct culture is a major reason why Macao is interesting to tourists.

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After the show, I rushed to the food stands selling delicacies from different places. Without knowing the names or contents of what I was buying, I sampled as many snacks as possible as I walked along. Soon my stomach was full.

Then, far off, the crowd began cheering. Edmund Ho Hau Wah, Chief Executive of the MSAR, had arrived. Lots of news photographers were taking pictures of him. Under the roar of the crowd, the Chief Executive tried food from every stand as he made his way through the crowds. Not only is he a man who can deal with thousands of documents every day, but he can also eat a lot! Aside from not disappointing the owners of the stalls, he had to maintain an upright posture while eating under the glare of camera lights. Not everyone could do this.

Later, the atmosphere around Our Lady of Carmel Church became really festive. The parade of the children began. They were sons and daughters of the Portuguese, all exquisitely dressed as is done in Portuguese festivals, and their parents and teachers stood on both sides of the church.

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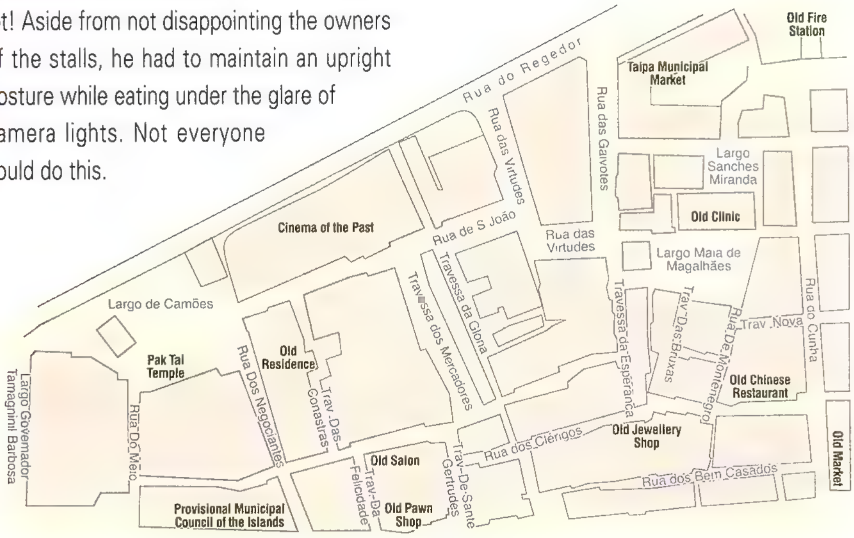
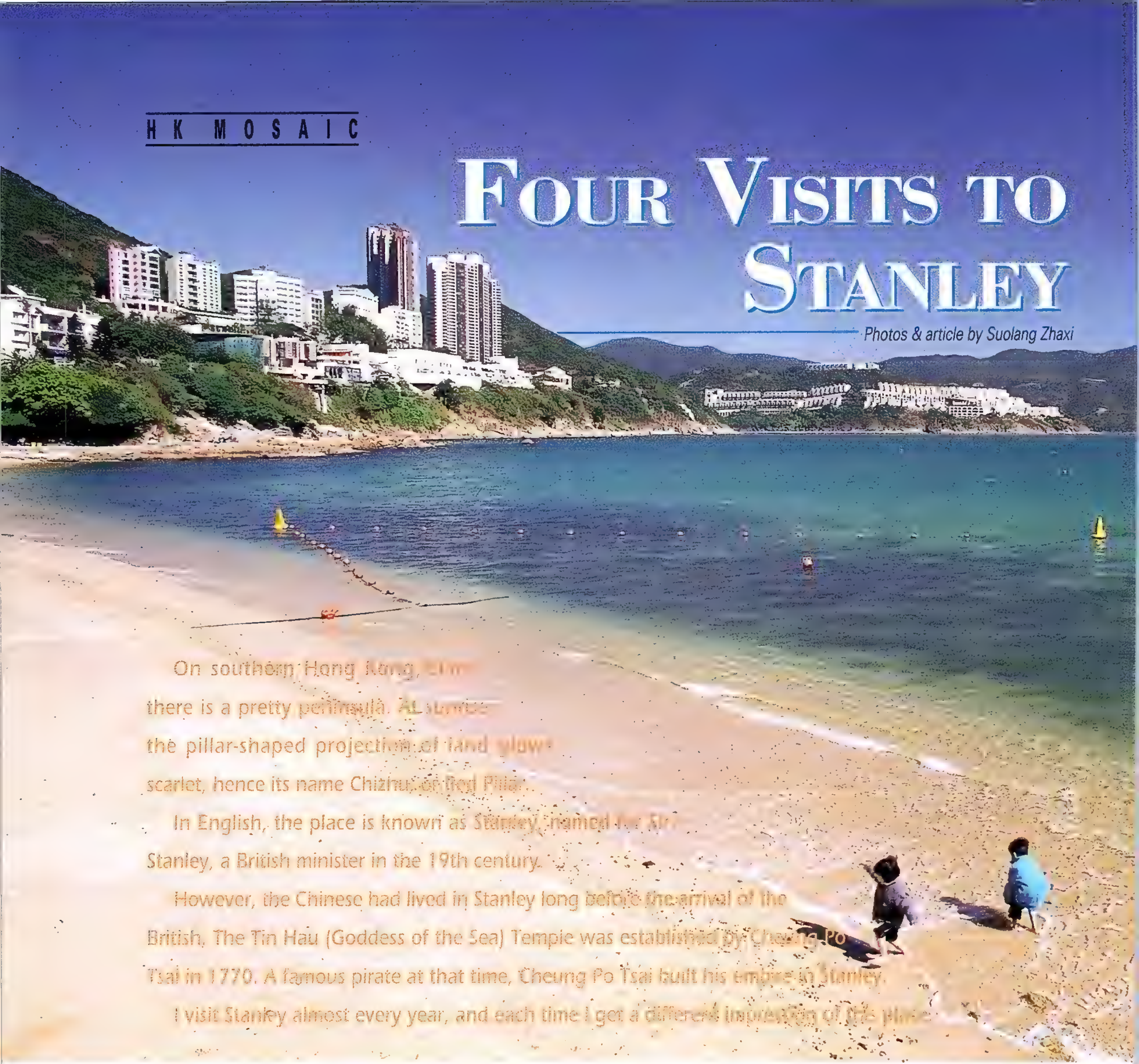
I read the programme in my hand — another series of dancing and singing performances, a lucky draw, all going on until midnight....

But I had to hurry to catch the last ferry back to Hong Kong. I left Macao reluctantly.

Translated by Ping Ting

1. **The jubilant Lusophony Festival.**
2. **The Chief Executive of the MSAR savours food at a stand.**
3. **There is a wide range of dried meat in Macao.**
4. **Table football, a popular game in Portugal.**
5. **A local store in Taipa.**


Old Fire Station
Taipa Municipal Market
Rua do Regedor
Rua das Virtudes
Rua das Gaivotes
Largo Sanches Miranda
Old Clinic
Cinema of the Past
Rua de S João
Rua das Virtudes
Largo Maia de Magalhães
Travessa dos Mercadores
Travessa da Gloria
Travessa da Esperança
Trav Das Bruxas
Rua De Montenegro
Trav Nova
Rua do Cunha
Largo de Camões
Pak Tai Temple
Old Residence
Rua Dos Negociantes
Trav Das Conastras
Old Chinese Restaurant
Largo Governador Tamagnini Barbosa
Rua Do Meio
Old Salon
Trav-Da-Felicidade
Old Pawn Shop
Trav-De-Sante Gertrudes
Rua dos Clérigos
Old Jewellery Shop
Rua dos Bem Casados
Old Market
Provisional Municipal Council of the Islands



FOUR VISITS TO STANLEY

Photos & article by Suolang Zhaxi

On southern Hong Kong, there is a pretty peninsula. At sunrise the pillar-shaped projection of land glows scarlet, hence its name Chizhu, or Red Pillar.

In English, the place is known as Stanley, named for Sir Stanley, a British minister in the 19th century.

However, the Chinese had lived in Stanley long before the arrival of the British. The Tin Hau (Goddess of the Sea) Temple was established by Cheung Po Tsai in 1770. A famous pirate at that time, Cheung Po Tsai built his empire in Stanley.

I visit Stanley almost every year, and each time I get a different impression of the place.

Encounter at the Military Cemetery

On my first visit to Stanley, I made a special visit to the Military Cemetery where British soldiers who lost their lives in Hong Kong during the Second World War are buried. Someone told me that it was the most cheerful cemetery in the world.

During the Second World War, Stanley was the last battlefield in Hong Kong to fall to the Japanese Army. The slope beside St. Stephen's Beach was where many British soldiers had come to rest permanently. Here, white gravestones stood in neat rows like troops at attention.

Eventually I came across an aged British couple holding a map, searching among the graves until they found the one they wanted. They wiped the dust from the stone tablet, knelt on the ground and prayed. Just before they left, I approached them and politely asked whose grave they had visited. It was actually that of the woman's father. He had been a doctor serving the British army in Hong Kong. The family had followed him out to live here, but she returned to

England at the age of nine. Later, during the war, her father died. It was the first time she had been back to Hong Kong since childhood.

A Meal at the Police Station

The second time I went to Stanley. It was to eat at the Stanley Police Station.

A listed heritage site, the Station is one of the oldest buildings on southern Hong Kong Island. It is a white tower with a plain yet sturdy appearance. After Cheung Po Tsai established his pirate empire here, Stanley became a base for pirates. In 1844, soon after it was built, the first Stanley police station incurred a challenge by the pirates – the ships carrying the wages for the police force were attacked. By the time the police arrived at the scene, however, the pirates were gone. Not until 1859, when the station was expanded and assigned more officers, did conditions improve.

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In 1941 when the Japanese army took over Hong Kong, Stanley was a strategic coastal defense post. It was the last place in the territory to be occupied by Japan.

More recently, the Station was turned into a restaurant called "Table88". The smell of gunpowder seemed to linger in the ancient building. Marks left from the past were noticeable under the lights. Having a meal here was fantastic. The Swiss chef prepared many appetising dishes, such as Rainbow Salmon or Moroccan meat and beans in hotpot. An impressive pudding called Chocolate Fantasy, in which pine nut cake and chocolate are topped with wine-flavoured cream, was unforgettable.

The Jubilant Dragon Boat Festival

I was in Stanley yet another time to shoot the annual dragon boat competition.

I arrived late to the celebration, which had already reached a fever pitch. The Dragon Boat Festival is held to commemorate Qu Yuan, a Chinese politician during the Spring & Autumn Period (770-221 B.C.), who jumped into the Yangtse River to show his patriotism.

The dragon boats set off to deafening drumbeats accompanied by the cheering of spectators and supporters of different teams on shore. Many foreign participants had taken advantage of the occasion to wear unusual costumes. Every team had matching outfits, but the most eye-catching were those worn by teams composed purely of westerners. Some wore red noses and funny hats; one team had dressed all in black and painted their the faces; another sported long tails attached to their backsides, which swished as they swaggered through the streets. This "united nations" spirit brought a sense of fun to the spectacle.

HONG KONG
XXL
波德
馬莉
珍
波
湯
馬
羅
拔
Size F
8"x10"
SHOP

BODDINGTONS
DRAUGHT

Murray House: a Reconstructed Historical Building

Since Stanley has lovely beaches, I made my next trip there a sunbathing expedition.

When I passed the Police Station, the main door was shut. The sign for "Table88" was gone, indicating that the restaurant had closed down.

In contrast to the Police Station restaurant, the rebuilt Murray House was a thriving tourist attraction. Originally, the Murray House, built in 1860, stood in Central and was the British officers' mess. The Rating & Valuation Department moved into the House much later in 1963. Then in 1978, the building was listed as a heritage site in Hong Kong. While it was being dismantled in 1982, its 4,000-plus granite blocks and pillars were painstakingly numbered. The pieces were stored for a time until they were moved to Stanley where, following the coded system, the entire building was reconstructed. Bullet marks, as well as the mortise slots that used to secure the now absent iron balustrades, are still clearly visible on the pillars.

Beside the Murray House there are some huge, freestanding pillars engraved with four large characters, "Tong Chang Da Ya", the typical phrase signifying a pawnshop. The pillars were taken from an old Chinese building once located on Shanghai Street in Yau Ma Tei. A flagpole in front of the House previously belonged to the British navy stationed there. During the war, the British sank their own boat to prevent the Japanese from occupying it. The eight dormer windows now installed on the roof of the House came from yet another old building, the former psychiatric hospital in Sai Ying Pun.

People visiting the Murray House may not be fully aware of its past, but they enjoy sitting in this historic building, having a cup of tea or a Thai meal. For me, it was a singular pleasure to sit in a building older than my great grandfather and eat delicious food amid the shafts of sunlight, which streamed in between the pillars.

Exotic Stanley Main Street

Stanley boasts many beaches. Though not very broad, each has its special characteristics. Meanwhile, apart from the beautiful, blue sea views, there are the mansions and other expensive residences of the wealthy. Surrounded by such "scenery", the sunshine and coastal breezes, I felt an impetus to strive for a better life.

7

Stanley Market, located between Stanley Bay and Stanley Main Beach, bustles after noontime. Foreigners, locals, new residents, and tourists from the mainland browse through shops selling everything from Chinese calligraphy and paintings, sculpture, antiques and folk art to toys, inexpensive clothing and souvenirs.

When I left the market, I came out on Stanley Bay. Stanley Street runs along the coast, and is lined with taverns and restaurants of various styles. It feels more like Europe than Hong Kong.

the olde English
DIAMOND
black
LORD STANLEY'S
FISH N CHIPS
STEAKMUSHROOM
CHICKENMUSHROOM
BURGER W/CHIP
RIBEYE STEAK
MIXED GRILL
LAMB CHOP
PORK CHOP
CHICKEN WING
8

I stopped at a Vietnamese restaurant called "Saigon" and walked up to the second floor from where I could view the sea.

Then a resonant drumming sounded and a group of college students dressed in Scottish outfits played some music. A show was also beginning in the open-air forum nearby, where residents and tourists had gathered under a tent. Different performing groups took their turns onstage. On the other side, a group of dancers taught Latin dance steps to onlookers. Meanwhile, the airy music of Guangdong Opera drifted over from the Village Square.

Stanley was truly on fire.

Transport:

- Take bus No. 6, 6X, or 260 from Exchange Square in Central. Duration: 40 minutes.
- Take minibus No. 40 from Tang Lung Street in Causeway Bay. Duration: 40 minutes.
- Take minibus No. 16M from Chai Wan MTR Station. Duration: 30 minutes.

1. Stanley Main Beach is the prettiest of all the beaches in Stanley.
2. An aged woman pays a visit to the Military Cemetery and tries to find her father's grave.
3. Supporters cheer on their dragon boat team.
4. Some Westerners dress up for the event.
5. Most tourists in Stanley are foreigners.
6. Drinking, talking, blowing bubbles and having fun.
7. Christmas decorations on a verandah of the Murray House.
8. Enjoying life, embracing sunlight and eating delicacies.

CULTURE

Tri-colour Glazed Pottery in Luoyang

Photos by Song Xiufa,
Article by Song Xiufa & Yin Yin

1

Whenever Luoyang is mentioned, many people naturally think of the peony. The matchless beauty of its peonies adds much lustre to this ancient city, making it "the capital of flowers". Consequently, few people know about Nanshishan Village situated close by in Mengjin County, the birthplace of the world-renowned tri-colour glazed pottery of the Tang Dynasty. Earlier this year, we paid a visit to the village, learned about its history and fortunately got to watch the whole process of its production.

3

Taking the Biscuit by Firing it Twice

Tri-colour glazed pottery in Nanshishan Village is still handmade in the traditional way, in much the same fashion as cloisonne is made. The kaolin clay, ordinary pottery clay or "white clay" as the locals call it, must be powdered, sifted and mixed with water in certain proportions on its way to becoming a biscuit (pottery that has been fired, but not yet glazed). The material is poured into concave moulds of various shapes. Matching convex moulds of a smaller size are carefully pressed into these moulds so that the walls of the piece will be even. When the clay is 70 — 80% dry, the two halves of the mould are separated, revealing the piece, half of a clay pot for example. More complicated objects must be done in several sections, each going through the moulding process and being impressed with designs or having patterns drawn on them, if called for. The segments are then cemented together and the seams where they join up are smoothed. When the piece is completely dry, it is fired in the kiln at a temperature of 1,100°C. It takes about 50 hours for a biscuit to cool. Unglazed biscuits turn a white colour after the first firing.

Application of the glaze comes next. The potter has various bowls and basins filled with glazes containing metallic elements such as copper, iron, cobalt, manganese and lead silicate and powder. The potters know how to apply the right glaze to achieve a certain shade. After glazing, the biscuit is fired again at a lower temperature of 800°C for over 20 hours. This second firing of the glazed biscuit produces the tri-colour glazed pottery we see in markets. Almost every family in the village has two kilns. While one is firing, the other is cooling so that potters can take out the finished wares and put in new ones ready for the next firing. In this way they can save time and produce more.

A Popular Art Form

Horses are the primary subjects of tri-colour glazed pottery. In addition, vessels, beauties and warriors are typical products. The exquisite craftsmanship shows in the smooth lines, clearly-wrought details and bright colours, making the pottery popular for both its artistic qualities and uniformity.

There is also a special kind of tri-colour glazed Tang pottery made in imitation of antiques. These pieces are produced with deliberate defects or broken parts, with faint or altered colours, to resemble artefacts just unearthed by archaeologists. Some of these imitations pass for relics, as it can be very hard to tell a fake from the genuine article.

According to experts, the more blue pigment a piece contains, the greater its value.

During our few days in Nanshishan Village, we not only observed the pottery production process, but also saw groups of serious collectors and others simply attracted by its fame. The hosts all kept their doors open, displaying their works with pride. Their taciturn manner seemed appraise us: did we have an artistic perception? When discussing prices, they were neither humble nor pushy, but full of the confidence of an emperor's daughter who never need worry about finding a husband. If an agreement was reached, pottery and payment were exchanged on the spot. If not, the seller ceased to argue and only smiled until the right price was mentioned. We were very surprised by this way of doing business. Nowadays, so many people are impatient for quick success and instant reward, but not these folks. The place was blissfully noncommercial. Maybe this is part of the reason for the pottery's enduring fame. Once, emperors who chose to be buried with them had prized them highly. Produced by artisans who will not bow to the market mentality, the works seem rare and hard to come by.

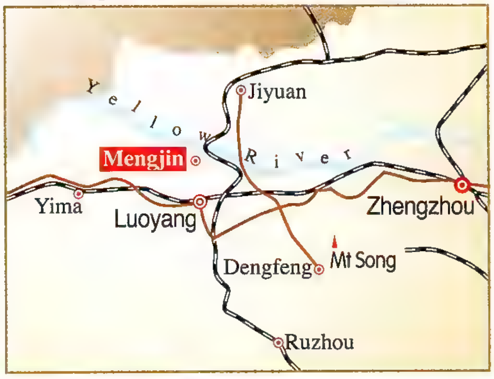
Just days before, when we bid farewell to the ancient capital of Luoyang, we took with us impressions of its high peaks and emerald verdure, as well as a great number of renowned cultural relic sites. Upon our departure from Nanshishan Village, we could scarcely bear to part with it. It amazed us to think that this tiny place, which was not even marked on the map, possessed a distinguished culture representing the highest level of Chinese pottery — the tri-colour glazed pottery of the Tang Dynasty!

Translated by Yu Ling

6

5

1. Horses are the primary subjects of tri-coloured glazed pottery.
2. After glazing, the biscuit is fired again at 800°C for over 20 hours. The finished, brightly coloured Tang pottery awaits removal from the kiln.
3. Each piece must be thoroughly examined by experienced craftsmen.
4. The kaolin clay mixture is poured into moulds of various shapes.
5. Every household has two kilns, which work in turns for more effective production.
6. A potter glazes a biscuit.
7. When a piece is 70 to 80% dry, it is carefully removed from the mould and left in the sun to dry completely.
8. Piecing together different segments of horse figurines.



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Brief Introduction to Tri-colour Glazed Tang Pottery:

Tri-colour glazed Tang pottery is a general term for ancient painted pottery having lead silicate as the main ingredient of its glaze. It was first produced during the Gaozong reign of the Tang Dynasty. In its earliest form, it was limited to only a few colours and objects. By the Kaiyuan reign, it had reached its peak in a variety of shapes and brighter colours. Many more pigments were added to the glaze such as lake blue, blue-black and aubergine. The production process had also been updated which improved the pottery's quality.

Tri-colour glazed pottery was specially made for the tombs of emperors and aristocrats, often in figurines of noblewomen, boy and girl attendants, officials, warriors and Heavenly kings. Among the animals represented are horses, camels, donkeys, pigs, oxen, sheep and dogs, while kitchenware include bottles, kettles, jars and cups of many different styles.

The Tunbao Honouring Mothers Festival

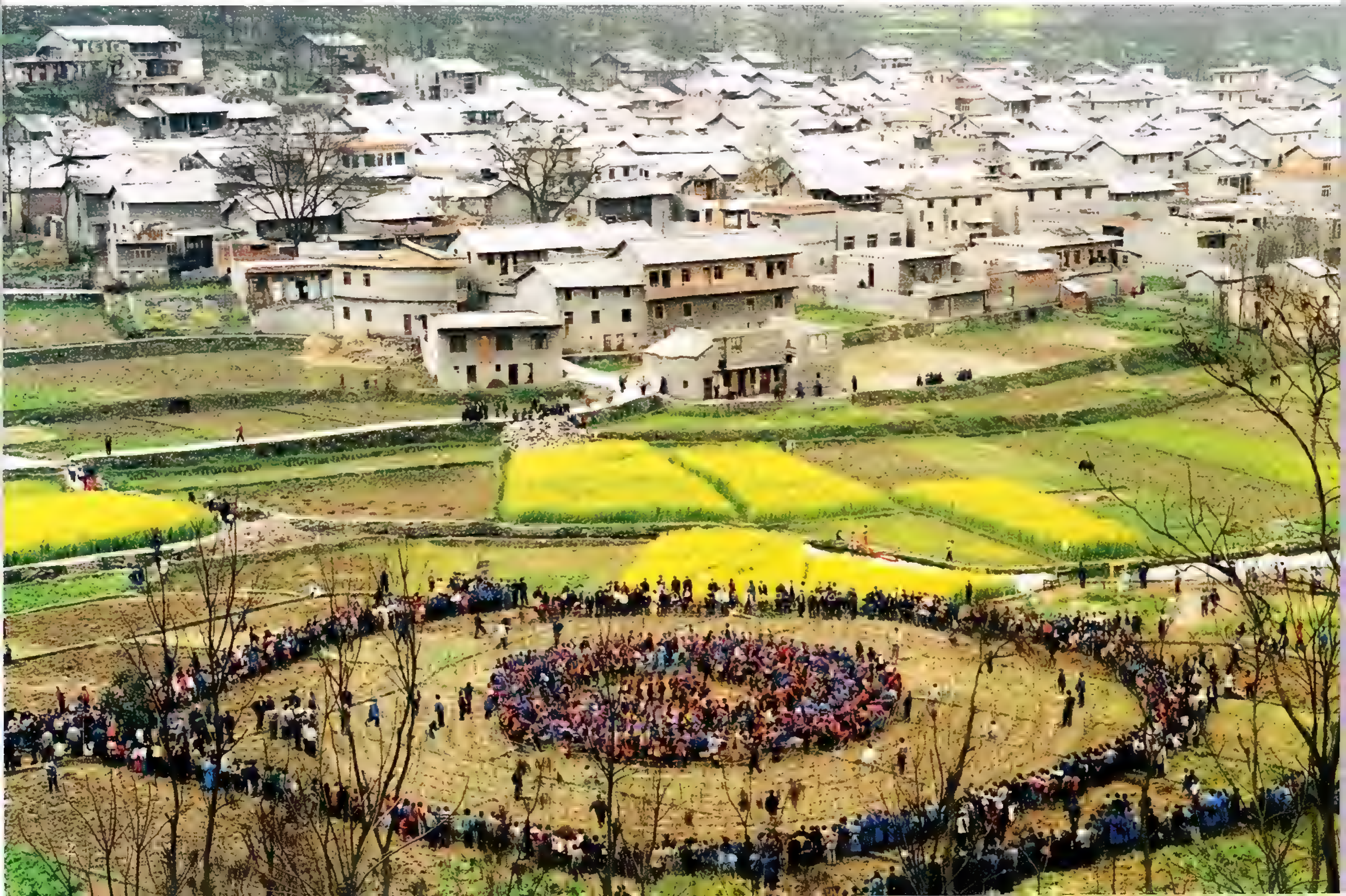
Photos & article by Wu DongjFestivalun

In the hinterland of the Miaoling Plateau in Anshun, western Guizhou, live the Tunbao people of strong cultural traditions. The Tunbao's unique architecture, Ming-style garments buttoned on the right, and various folk tales and legends draw both historians and tourists for cultural study. The special way that Tunbao people show filial respect to their mothers is a real eye-opener....

A Ceremony Every 12 Years

In addition to their singular buildings and attire, the Tunbao people's distinct lifestyle has remained unchanged for several hundred years. Their tradition of showing filial piety to their mothers has become a grand festival. Crossing the Rivers is a fascinating memorial event during the festival, which takes place once every 12 years, usually in spring. Observers are transported back to ancient times by watching these unsophisticated rituals.

Starting from Guiyang, capital of Guizhou Province, we headed west. Traces of the route trodden by caravans long ago appeared and disappeared here and there deep in the mountains, making it difficult to follow the tracks of the ancients in our search for history. A rough road, built 50 years ago alongside the original thoroughfare, had been replaced by a modern highway. After travelling the highway for about 100 km, we turned for the famous Tunbao Villages in central Guizhou to witness the Crossing the



Rivers festival, the memorial ceremony for mothers. When we got to Jichang Village in Daxiqiao Township, we found we were late, because the procession of more than 3,000 villagers, all wearing their best clothes and carrying colourful flags and banners, had already begun walking along the ancient road.

The festival is known locally as Crossing the Rivers. Legend has it that in ancient times there was a mother who worked hard managing household affairs and bringing up children during her lifetime but was banished by the King of Hell to the lowest depths of Hell after she left the human world. When her children were grown, they cherished the memory of their mother and intended to rescue her to repay her for her loving care. One spring day they walked together along the way their mother had taken, broke through 24 barriers, and finally found the King of Hell. When they saw their miserable mother in a river of blood, they denounced the King of Hell for his cruelty. The King of Hell told them the river had been formed by the blood and tears their mother had shed when she was in the human world. Without hesitation, they retrieved their mother and spirited her across the river back to the human world.

In reality, women played the main role in the daily life of these villages. While men went out to do battle or business, women were left to tend household affairs and do the farming. In order to show respect for women, the local people established a festival for their mothers. They enacted a ceremony based on the legend. The long procession march along the ancient road for nearly five kilometres until they reach a formation of 18 circles symbolising the Hell. Here they "cross" the Blood River, Silver River, Peace River and Great River and finally, after expressing their best wishes, return home and end the ceremony.

Developing Tunbao Culture

The Crossing the Rivers Festival is held once every 12 years in Jichang Village in a year of the dragon. However, there are over 100 villages and 100 different major clans around the city of Anshun, all of whom celebrate their particular festivals in line with their own traditions and customs. So, a festival is going on almost every year in some part of the Anshun region. Like any other festival, this one is organised by local people of their own accord, usually by elderly male enthusiasts. All the work, planning and fund raising, is done on a voluntary basis.

3

In Jichang Village we came across an old man surnamed Shi who told us: "We hold the Crossing the Rivers Festival with the purpose of developing our Tunbao culture so as to carry on the tradition from generation to generation. In this way, the younger generations of Tunbao people learn how to treat their mothers with filial respect and to love all mothers of the world. Our Tunbao culture is very rich and we attach great importance to Crossing the Rivers. Now, many people come to study our culture. Today, Guizhou is developing tourism projects, and many beautiful places draw numerous tourists both from home and abroad. We hope more visitors come to our village to enjoy our local operas, taste our delicious food and experience the simplicity, hospitality and honesty of the Tunbao people." Another old man surnamed Wang said: "In holding the present session of the festival, more than a dozen 60-year-old men and 20 young people worked as volunteers. We did a lot of things like erecting the decorated gateways and writing couplets without charging a cent. We saved money to buy materials. Although we were tired after the work, we felt happy in our hearts."

A Women's Festival

Since Crossing the Rivers is a folk activity

1. **Senior women are much respected at the Tunbao festival honouring mothers.**
2. **The locals get into a formation of 18 circles symbolising the Hell.**
3. **Tian Yingzhen, supported by her children, spent three hours walking and finally "crossed" the River of Blood.**
4. **When the ceremony of Crossing the Rivers ended, the locals played the drum and wished for a good harvest the following year.**

showing respect and appreciation for women, most of its participants are women, much like March 8th, the International Working Women's Day.

Crossing the Rivers is a very popular and influential activity held regularly in all the villages around Anshun, with several thousand men and women, old and young, taking part. Old people join in to commemorate their deceased mothers or other ancestors, while young people take part to express their appreciation for their living mothers. Of course, there are others who come to beg for good luck or express good wishes. In the procession, the family marching at the forefront is called "The First River", the family behind them is "The Second River", and the third family, "The Third River". The families after them are arranged without such designations. This time in Jichang Village, "The First River" leading the 3,000-person procession was headed by Tian Yingzhen, who has two sons and two daughters. All of her children have grown up, some working in the township government and some teaching, and they had bought a car. Regarded as the most prosperous of Jichang Village, her family had donated 1,600 yuan to hold this festival. Walking with her were 13 family members, including her sons and daughters-in-law, daughters and sons-in-law, all wearing red silk sashes with flowers pinned to them. Supported by her children, Tian Yingzhen, who is 55 years old, walked forward, followed by people carrying offerings such as sweets, fruits, joss sticks, candles and firecrackers. After "breaking through the 24 barriers" on the ancient road, her children began to scatter paper money and rice towards a symbolic King of Hell and devils of the nether world to wish their mother good health and a long life. On the gate of one barrier guarded by devils, there was a couplet, which read: "When you have mercy and do good deeds in this life, you will be reincarnated as a millionaire in the next life."

Being shown such high regard by her children in front of so many people, Tian Yingzhen felt extremely honoured and happy and displayed the new clothes her children had bought her for this occasion. When the ceremony ended, we went to her home, which was full of joyous guests and friends, much like a wedding.

Translated by Yu Ling

1. **Thousands of Tunbao people are walking "across the rivers" along the ancient road.**
2. **Mothers who join in the festival all wear red silk sashes with flowers pinned to them, as they walk to the field.**

Tips for the Traveller

- **Transport:** The Crossing the Rivers festival is held in several dozen villages around Anshun. Jichang Village is about 20 km south of the city proper. From Guiyang, drive along the Guiyang-Huangguoshu Highway for 100 km to Daxiqiao Town. Change to a local bus or rent a motor-tricycle for 10 yuan at Daxiqiao, and continue half an hour to Jichang Village. Or take the Guiyang-Kunming train to Anshun and change to a minibus for Jichang. The train is usually safer and cheaper than a bus.
- **Accommodation:** The Crossing the Rivers Festival takes place around March 15. Contact local village committees or travel services for exact dates before you go. The festival is easy to reach and well run. Meals are provided by the local organising committee, at just two yuan per person. There are restaurants in the villages and snack food also. For 10 yuan, you can eat and drink your fill. Rooms in villagers' houses are clean, though conditions are simple and crude. It costs 5-10 yuan a night per person.
- **Climate:** Central Guizhou is not too cold in winter and not too hot in summer, perfect for travelling light. There are, however, many things worth photographing, so remember to pack enough batteries and films.

Changeable Fanjing Mountain

Photos & article by Liang Zhiwen

Last April, I went with two friends to Fanjing Mountain in the northeastern part of Guizhou Province. We caught a bus from Jiangkou County to the foot of Fanjing Mountain, where we hired a guide and a car to Yuaopo. This saved us about two hours of walking time. Even so, it was half past nine in the morning by the time we began climbing the 8,000 steps up the mountain. We climbed most of the first half without pausing to rest, then stopped at a log cabin situated at the 3,600th step and had lunch before continuing. Since the mountain was covered by heavy mist and fog, we could find nothing special to photograph. After three and a half hours, we had climbed 2,000 km and arrived at the foot of Xinjinding, but here the fog was even thicker. Then suddenly a huge peak loomed faintly before us: Xinjinding Peak! Grasping the iron chains that line the stairs there, we ascended the narrow steps and, after passing through the icicle-filled Jindao Gorge, we reached the summit.

After half an hour on the peak, we decided to turn back. By then the sky was starting to brighten, and places such as Laojinding, Mushroom Rock, "Old Basin and Jade Bowl" and the "Ten-Thousand-Volume Book" gradually came into view. On the way back, we visited the Qing-dynasty Buddhist pagoda, stone steles, and Zhenguo Monastery which is now under repair. Because we had lingered awhile before a group of grotesquely-shaped rocks of phyllite, it was 6:00 p.m. before we knew it. So we had to lodge in the Jinding Rest House at Wanbao Cliff.

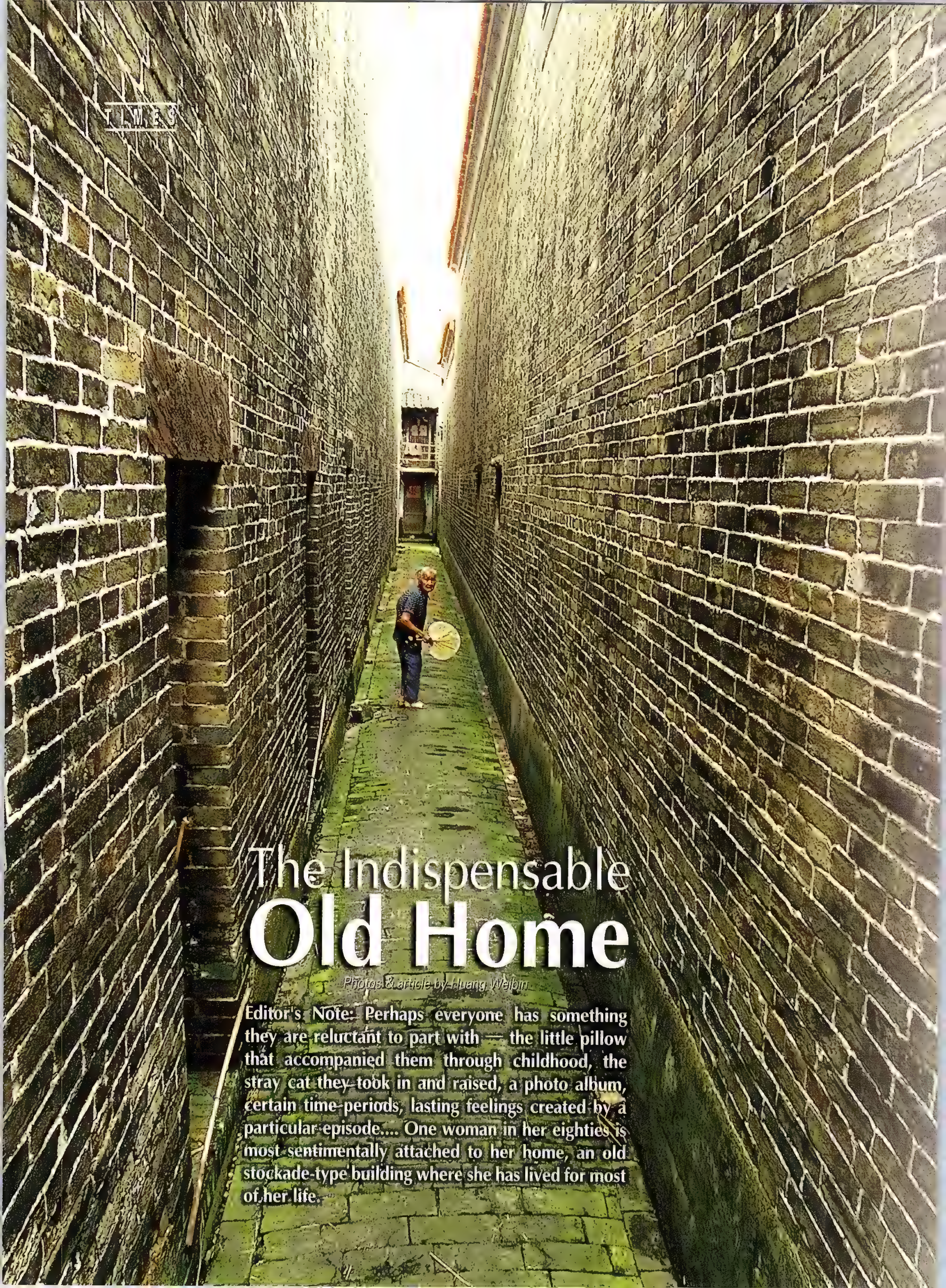
At half past five the next morning, I dressed hastily, took up my photographic equipment and went to the roof of the rest house intending to shoot the sunrise. To my surprise, the grass and trees in the near distance were covered by a thin layer of snow, while the mountain ranges further away were now hidden in a sea of clouds. Just as I was wondering why I couldn't see the sunrise at all, a drift of light fog floated towards me. In an instant, the fog turned into a swirl of snowflakes. Five minutes later, the surrounding mountains were restored to their original aspect. The weather of Fanjing Mountain was certainly changeable!

After breakfast, we set off for the Nine-Dragon Pool. We walked through a bamboo grove along a makeshift, muddy path. From there we saw the Huge Rock Pillar and Xinjinding from another angle. After we emerged from the bamboo grove, the guide said: "the big mountain ahead is Phoenix Mountain which we couldn't see very well yesterday. Halfway up the mountain is the basin-like Nine-Dragon Pool, the largest of the nine pools there. But there is no water in it for long periods of time. The other eight pools, which lie just beyond it, are also empty. Do you want to walk farther on?" I was a bit disappointed about the Nine-Dragon Pool, because it was a hollow crater, not a pond full of clear water as I had imagined, although it was overgrown with luxuriant bushes and blossoming azaleas. With nothing more to look forward to, we turned round and headed for Laojinding.

After seeing Jiuhuang Cave we walked up a steep, winding flight of stairs and rocky footholds. At noon, we finally reached Laojinding. The red sun, which we had not seen for the last two days, hung in the sky. As we looked around, the "Ten-Thousand-Volume Book" loomed in the distance like a pile of toy bricks and the Huge Stone Pillar of Xinjinding, next to Phoenix Mountain, resembled a small stalagmite. Peaks, cliffs and strange rock formations in the near distance all came into view at once.

After reaching the foot of Laojinding, we turned onto another path to the "Beggar Cave". Originally, we thought it was a mountain cave, but as we got nearer, we found it was a hollowed-out rock. Still, with its clearly discernible veins, it looked very special.

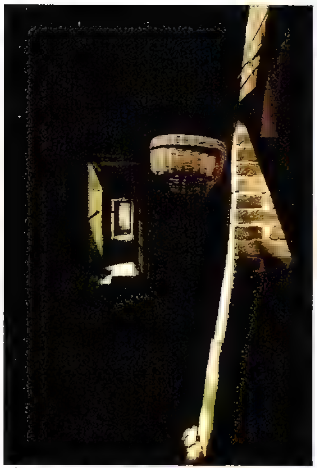
Translated by Xiong Zhenru



The Indispensable Old Home

Photos & article by Huang Weibin

Editor's Note: Perhaps everyone has something they are reluctant to part with — the little pillow that accompanied them through childhood, the stray cat they took in and raised, a photo album, certain time-periods, lasting feelings created by a particular episode.... One woman in her eighties is most sentimentally attached to her home, an old stockade-type building where she has lived for most of her life.



This simple and crude kitchen has served her well for over 70 years.

In Xiba Stone Village of Yunan County at the upper reaches of the Xijiang River in Guangdong Province, there is a stockade-like building which covers an area of 0.67 hectares and has a history of about 200 years. As it was built by a man named Qiu Guangyi, local people call the structure Guangyi Big House. Today, descendants of the Qiu clan still live there.

The Big House is built from gray bricks and dark tiles and is cemented with pounded lime. A windowless outer wall, with an average thickness of 0.8 metres, surrounds the entire structure. Its original purpose was to keep out intruders. The building reaches 20 metres at its tallest point, but its average height is 4 metres. On top of the wall surrounding the square-shaped Big House runs a passageway that connect all parts of the building, from which people could shoot weapons undetected. Undoubtedly, such a strongly built rampart was invulnerable in the old days.

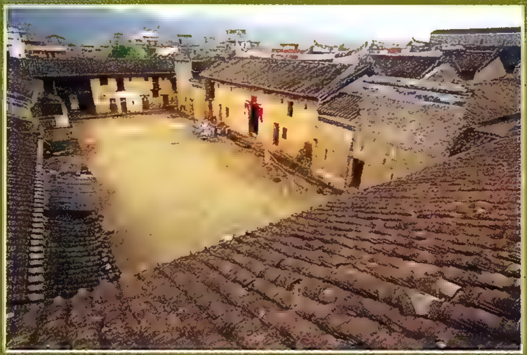
Inside the fortified building stand several houses, all of the post-and-panel construction typical of the nationality living south of the Five Ridges. Altogether, the building boasts 135 rooms.

About 200 years ago, Qiu Guangyi earned a living by selling fried bean curd. In his spare time he and his four sons baked bricks, felled trees in the nearby mountains, bought other building materials and employed builders with the money they had accumulated over the years. To protect their family and descendants from the threat of bandits and the harassment and reckless activities of ruffians, the father and sons designed and built the perfect home in ten years' time. According to records, during one period of great prosperity, more than 700 members of the Qiu clan lived in the Guangyi Big House. Well-hidden in the passage atop the defensive wall, they succeeded in warding off enemy invasion many times and lived in their confinement from generation to generation. In this way, they eventually formed their own great clan system and way of life. Even today, they continue to practise and pass on the age-old traditions so that the characteristics of the nationality south of the Five Ridges live on in what they eat and drink, their lifestyle, language and costume.

But time shoots past like an arrow in flight. As later descendants of the clan came to learn more about the outside world, they lost the ways of their ancestors. As their lifestyles changed, most moved away from their old home. All these suggest that the Big House, which embodies our forefathers' ideal living environment of heaven, earth and man all in one place, has fulfilled its ancient purpose and evolved into the best monument and museum displaying the development of the southern area of the Five Ridges.

However, an 88-year-old woman is still sentimentally attached to the Guangyi Big House—her old home. Lin Wu married into the Big House clan when she was 17 as the second concubine of the young master of the Qiu Family. She gave birth to five children, but only one daughter survived. Years ago that daughter married and moved to Macao. When China began to carry out its economic reforms and open itself to the outside world, the old woman moved to Macao to live out her days, but she could not forget her old home and went back to live in it for a period of time every year. Recently, she moved back to live in the Guangyi Big House permanently, or as she puts it: "I have lived here for 70 years. The Big House is my only home; my roots are here...".

Translated by Xiong Zhenru



Guangyi Big House, covering an area of 0.667 hectares, has a history of 200 years.

Though in her eighties, Lin Wu still works in her vegetable garden every day.

Young men from the village come to carry water for the old woman every two days.

Behind the protective wall, time stands still, while outside the world continues to change. Is Lin Wu to be the last keeper of Guangyi Big House?

Left: The long corridors on the east and west sides of the fortified building connect many smaller courtyards to form a compound.

by Sze Jingsang

My First Sight of Snow at the No. 1 Glacier

Article by Mimi

At 11 a.m. the bus to the No. 1 Glacier was waiting in front of the hotel.

As we drove along the winding, bumpy road through the mountains, I saw a flock of sheep obediently following a herdsman on his horse. My heart filled with peace and harmony. Just in front of us, a family was on the move, their furniture and tent carried on horseback. I gazed greedily out of the window, looking hard for the glacier amid the towering mountains and dense, green woods. Beautiful scenes passed by, one after another.

It was 2 p.m. when our bus stopped at the end of the road.

I was totally amazed and excited by the view before me. Standing on the snow, I silently regarded this large stretch of white land. The high, majestic mountains were covered with layers of the purest snow, which sparkled brilliantly in the sun. It was so bright that it hurt to look at it, but I could not take my eyes away. I lumbered forward, looking back now and then to see the footprints I left behind. Still, I wanted to get closer to it, so I sat down on the snowy ground and stretched myself out fully upon it. How can I describe my feelings at that moment?

An hour passed all too quickly and our guide urged us to return. Suddenly, something white and feathery began to fall. Was it snowing? Yes! The flakes floated down gently, landing on me without the slightest touch. What a wonderful sensation! My first encounter with snow will stay in my memory forever.

Shipboard Petty Theft

Article by Mo Guohua

As the far northern European countries are rather rich, not many people have daily worries about food and clothing, so theft is virtually unknown. With that impression, I let down my guard while I was travelling there. Long before the trip, I had dreamt of taking a luxurious cruise in order to appreciate the landscape along the way, especially the part from Sweden to Finland. But with my tight budget, I never considered it until I heard that with a train ticket I could board a ship. I decided I couldn't miss the chance.

The size and grandeur of the ship were simply stunning. It was as tall as 20 storeys, and the lower levels were reserved for cars. Upon boarding, I found the place where there were open bunks for anyone with a train ticket. I put down my luggage and a small bag containing a camera flash, some food, a map and a windcheater without any hesitation and went to tour around the ship with some other people. When I came back an hour later, my small bag was gone. It was the first time I had ever lost anything and I was very annoyed. I searched everywhere but found nothing. Exasperated, I went to the guardroom to report it and saw my bag there! The map, food and camera flash were still in it, but the windcheater was missing. September in Europe was well into autumn with temperatures just a few degrees above 0°C. I wouldn't make it without a jacket and it would be expensive to buy another one. Luckily another Hong Kong tourist kindly lent me one, for which I was very grateful.

After I calmed down, I put all my valuables into a locker. Although I didn't lose much that time, it left me with an unhappy memory. I learned the hard way that wherever we are, we must be on the alert and look after our belongings. Otherwise, the holiday mood and the rest of our trip can be adversely affected.

Unfortunate Occurrence on Unfamiliar Ground

Article by Li Zhaoji

The names of Yanbian and Helong in Jilin Province were unfamiliar to me. However, at the invitation of a good friend from R. O. Korea, I decided to spend a holiday there.

Along my way I noticed that the names of the shops, factories and buildings were mostly written in Korean, and many women wore traditional Korean dress. I began to wonder if I was still in China.

The next day, there was a big snowstorm. Fortunately, I had brought enough warm clothes along, but my plan to visit the Heavenly Pond in the Changbai Mountains had to be cancelled. I could only tour the city.

The people of Korean nationality are fond of kissing the cup, so at every meal I tried some kind of beer or liquor, which always left me half drunk. One night, I went to a bar with some new friends. Carelessly, I took off my coat, leaving my purse in one of its pockets, and went to the toilet. When I came back, I didn't notice anything was wrong. However, when I called a taxi to return to the hotel, I couldn't find my purse.

Startled out of my drunkenness, I panicked and rushed back to the bar to look for it, but to no avail. My friends there advised me to make a report to the police. Since I discovered that my ID card had not been taken, I decided not to go to the police station in order to save time. Meanwhile, my friend lent me some money.

I called Hong Kong to report the loss of my credit card early the next day, and then went to the Yanbian Airport right after that. But the airport was closed because of the snowstorm, and no one could say when it would open again. I asked many times and eventually was told that there was a train to Beijing at noontime. I hurried to the railway station. Only when I had a ticket in my hand did I breathe a sigh of relief.

After a slightly better night on the train, I had to catch a flight at the Capital Airport of Beijing for Shenzhen. Although I had to change planes and trains several times, it was a great relief to be heading home again.

by Chan Yat Nin

Fond Memories of an Elderly Japanese Man

Article by Eliza Tong

One winter over ten years ago, I travelled alone, as I had done before, to study in Japan. Since it was not a tourist season and I wanted a flexible schedule, I didn't make any hotel reservations except for the beginning and end of the trip.

On a snowy day, after taking a cruise to Matsushima, one of the three natural wonders of Sendai in northeastern Japan, I visited a temple in Itsukushima nearby. I always travel alone, so I don't take a tripod with me, as it is bulky. Therefore, I could only take pictures of the landscape. But looking at the beautiful scenery all around, I suddenly felt like taking a picture of myself. How I wished to find someone to help. Since it was the off-season, I waited a long time before a tourist group came. I approached an elderly man for help. The elderly man happily obliged me and then asked where I came from because I spoke poor Japanese. We talked for a while, and then some of the women joined us. They warmly invited me to take their bus to the city. As I had wasted a lot of time waiting for a "photographer", I agreed that it would be nice to get to the city quickly. Seeing a well-known tourist agency name on the bus window, I felt they were trustworthy and accepted their offer.

When they discovered that I hadn't yet booked a hotel room, the elderly man suddenly invited me to stay at his house for the night. I pretended not to understand him because I didn't know how to refuse him politely. The other woman then told me not to worry because he was highly respected in his company. His wife had passed away years before. Now he lived with his son, daughter-in-law and grandsons. The elderly man also tried to explain to me in Mandarin that he just wanted to be a friend to the Chinese. I was finally persuaded.

The bus stopped before a three-storey house with a black-tiled roof by the roadside. After bidding everyone else farewell, I followed the elderly man into his house. The elderly man took my backpack and explained to a middle-aged woman how we had met. The middle-aged woman served us tea as his son, daughter-in-law and his two grandsons chatted with me. Later I learnt that during World War II he was sent to northeastern China. He hated war but he had had to obey orders. At that time he secretly made friends with quite a few Chinese. He stayed in China with a head injury until Japan surrendered, and even now he remembered bits of the Mandarin he had learnt from his Chinese friends. He did his best to speak to me in Mandarin. I normally only spoke it at work but now it seemed much more meaningful. Despite the age gap between us, our friendship had begun.

The elderly man had travelled around in spite of his old age and bad health. He should be free of his pain by now. Our meeting, more than a decade ago, was unforgettable, and I am still moved every time I recall it.

Contributions Solicited

We are grateful for the warm support of our readers who have sent us their contributions. Please remember that you are always welcome to write to us about your various travel experiences so that you can share them with other readers. You can write about your impressions of a place, episodes of a trip, or encounters during a journey. The story for this column should be no more than 800 words. A full-length story of 1,000-1,500 words with good photos may be published in another column of the magazine, "Traveller's Corner".

Please mail your story to: English Editorial Department, Hong Kong China Tourism Press, 24/F Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or send it via Email: edit-e@hkctp.com.hk.

PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE

How to Create Environmental Portraits

Photographing people is often the most difficult challenge for the travel photographer. Unlike studio portraiture in which a subject can be posed, backgrounds controlled, and lights adjusted for maximum effect, creating portraits of people in remote locations can be daunting. However, if done well, portraits are often the most memorable pictures one can bring back from a trip to a distant place.

1

Photos & article by Robert Jerome

Robert Jerome is a New York-based photographer who has travelled extensively. In his 25-year career, he has visited over 60 countries. Religious ceremonies and other aspects of local life with a strong ethnic flavour are his favourite subjects. He shares some of his photography tips below.

Travel portraits are often referred to as "environmental portraits", that is, they depict people in their natural environments. They are in essence portraits that evoke a sense of the subject's location. In the most effective environmental portraits, the location is often simply hinted at through dress or an activity in which the subject is engaged. In fact, if the viewer has to work a bit to determine the location of the subject through subtle "environmental clues", the picture becomes more interesting than if a subject is posed in front of a sign that blares out environmental information, such as "Grand Canyon", for example.

Tip 1

Put your subjects at ease. There is nothing less artful than a portrait of someone staring straight into the camera with a frozen smile on his face. Often it is necessary to spend a good deal of time chatting with your subject to relax him even before broaching the topic of creating his portrait. Interaction with your subject will also enrich your travel experience. In situations where language differences create communication problems, hand gestures and smiles can go a long way toward establishing a rapport with your subjects.

Tip 2

Always ask for the subject's consent before taking his picture. In locations where language differences exist, consent can often be gained simply by pointing toward your camera and waiting for your subject to nod approval.

Tip 3

Frame your subject in such a way that environmental clues in the portrait give the viewer a sense of the subject's location. Sometimes this may require the inclusion of a large part of the background; at other times, the subject's dress, jewellry or facial decorations may be sufficient to convey a sense of the subject's location. The trick is to include only enough environmental information to give an indication of the location. Too many clues or very obvious clues result in amateurish or uninteresting portraits.

2

3

Tip 4

In composing your portrait, bring out the subject's eyes. When we communicate with people, we usually look into their eyes, and thus we are conditioned to look into the eyes of the subject of a portrait. Eyes can be dramatically emphasized by shooting the subject in close-up and eliminating unnecessary background detail. Cropping a portrait to exclude the top part of the subject's hair is also effective. Using a flash to create pinpoints of reflected light in the subject's pupils, called "catch lights", can also draw attention to the eyes of a portrait's subject.

Tip 5

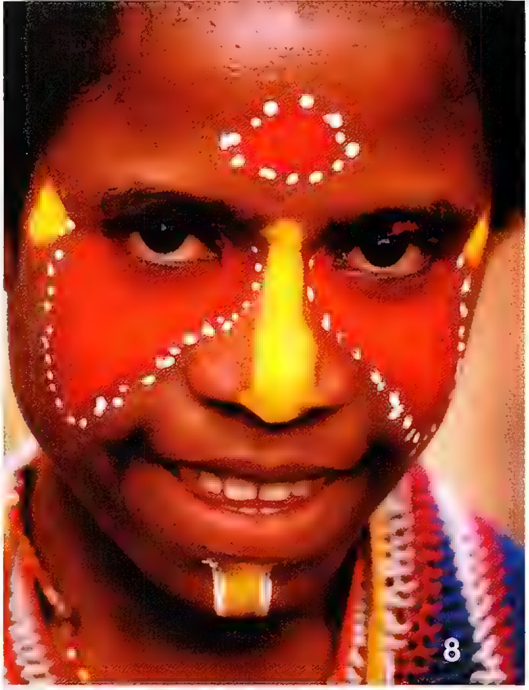
Photograph people engaged in activities that are emblematic of their culture. Some balancing is required here. If the activity is too dramatic, it will divert attention from the person's face and the picture will cease to be effective as a portrait. Choose activities that are subtle and evocative without being distracting.

Tip 6

There is nothing wrong with posing your subjects if the result enhances your subject's character and does not result in a rigid or staged appearance. If you tell your subject to follow your finger with his eyes, the result is often a pleasing portrait, as your subject is not staring directly into the camera. If language presents a problem, demonstrate the pose you wish your subject to assume.

Tip 7

If your subject asks for a copy of his portrait, ALWAYS take his name and address and make sure he gets a copy.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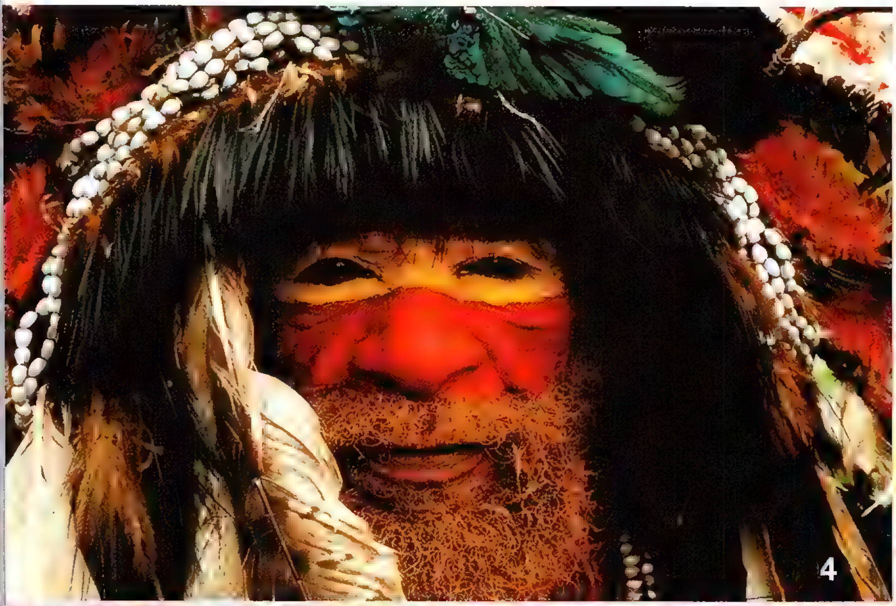
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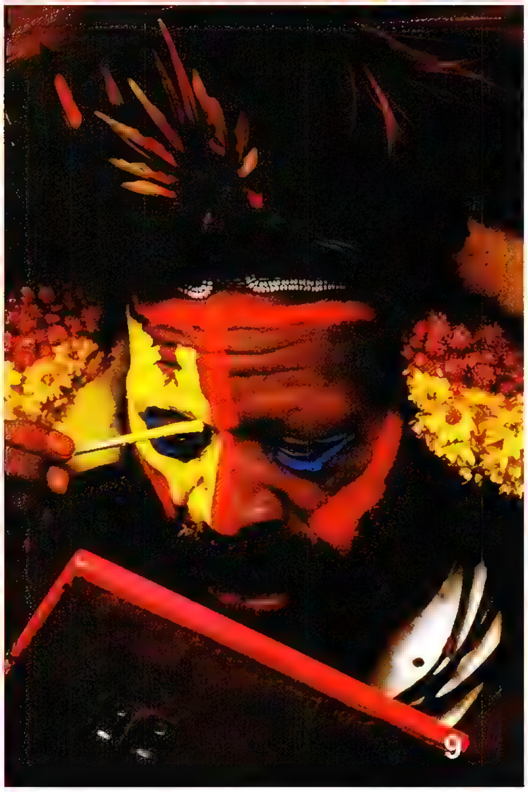
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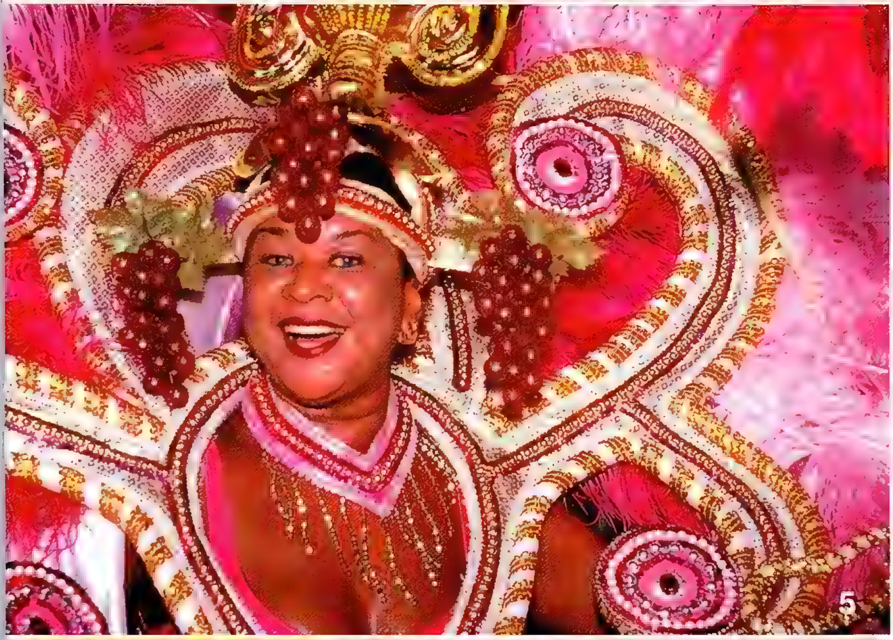
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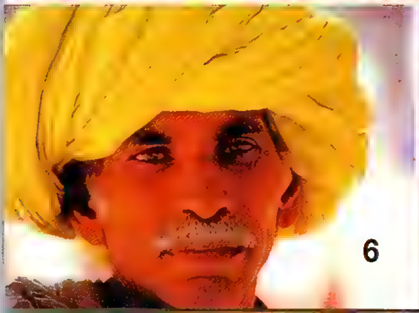
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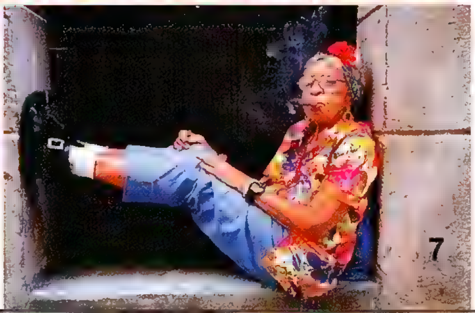
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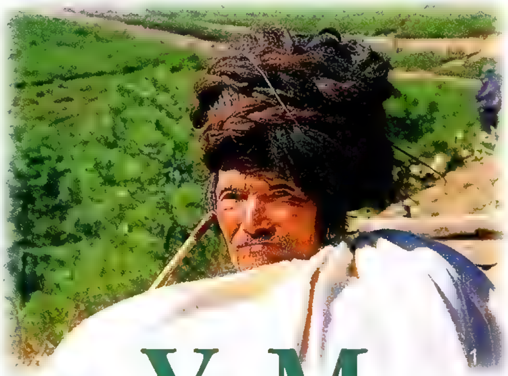
1,2,5. The Carnival costumes of the subjects provide environmental clues. In addition, these images illustrate the use of "catch lights" to enliven the subjects' eyes. (1. Port of Spain, Trinidad; 2. Venice, Italy; 3. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
4. The feathered headdress and make-up provide clues to the location of this Huli Wigman in Papua New Guinea.
3,9. A subtle activity (praying, applying make-up, etc.) adds to a portrait without diverting attention from the subject. (3. Varanasi, India; 9. Pushkar, India)
6. The vivid turban identifies this man as a native of the Rajasthan region of India, where bright clothing is the norm.
7. This Cuban woman's legs-up pose emphasises her relaxed deameanour as she enjoys a good cigar.
8. By coming in close and eliminating extraneous detail (even cutting off the top portion of the person's hair), you can highlight a subject's eyes as in this portrait of a Papua New Guinea girl.

The forefathers of the Yi ethnic group had the tradition of wearing their hair in a cone-shaped coi. Even now, many Yi men keep their hair uncut from birth, wearing it coiled into a bun, which is how it will remain for the rest of their lives. There are three types of buns: a slice, a hero's knot and the cone-shaped coil.

In the lofty mountains of Puge County in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, there is an elderly Yi man renowned for his long hair.

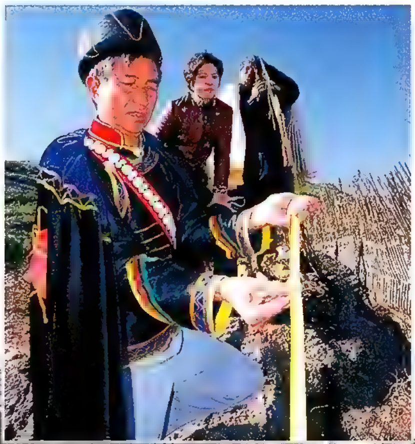


A VISIT TO THE LONG-HAIRED YI MAN

Photos & article by You Xiaojun

I had long heard of such an elderly Yi man, but had had no chance of seeing him until one day when the county government formed an investigative group and I was invited to go along.

The elderly man lives in Geluo Village of Yedi Township deep in the mountains. When we reached the village, we could see at a distance an elderly man, whose hair was coiled up on his head like a hill, sitting by his door talking with a fellow villager. His house was of typical Yi construction: earthen walls with tile roofing. Everything looked so simple, primitive and natural, as if time had turned back to remote antiquity.



The long-haired Yi man wrapped himself in a brand new woollen cloak, wore a pair of blue rubber shoes, and had an old pipe in his mouth. Our Yi guide told him about the purpose of our visit and the old man greeted us with nods and smiles. After the guide led him to a big rock by a vegetable plot, he began to uncoil his long hair. It was simply incredible; his hair was so long, so dark and so soft! When the braids were let down, they reached all the way to the ground, covering his entire height of 1.75 metres. After sitting for a while, he began to undo the plaits. Maybe it had been awhile since he last took down his hair, as much of it was stuck together. Although it looked a little brown on the surface, it was pitch-black and lustrous inside. His long locks spread in all directions like a cascade of dark ink. The tape measure revealed his hair to be as long as 2.87 metres! After a while, with the help of his granddaughter, he braided his hair again and piled it high into a bun on the top of his head. Under the pure blue sky and surrounded by ranges of green mountains, the old man sat there calmly and solemnly. We could read in his face all the vicissitudes of life and hardships he had experienced.

The long-haired man was 66 years old at the time I visited him. He has remained hale and hearty and seldom been sick all his life. During the "cultural revolution", he was taken as a "demon" because of his long hair, and was shaved bald three times. After 20 years, his hair has grown to be over two metres long again. If not for that 10 years of catastrophe, how remarkable it would be! He told us that his grandfather's hair had grown to over five metres. So it seems a natural inheritance from his ancestors.

Translated by Yu Ling

1. **The vicissitudes the man has experienced in life are as numerous as the hairs on his head.**
2. **Just how long is it?**
3. **He has remained in the company of his tile-roofed house and the impoverished Greater Liangshan Mountain, day and night.**

Travel Industry Bounces Back

Looking Forward to ITE HK 2002

The 16th International Travel Expo Hong Kong (ITE HK 2002) will be held from May 30 through June 2, 2002, at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. The organiser of the expo is receiving encouraging feedback from scheduled exhibitors, despite a global downturn in the tourism industry after the September 11 tragedy.

"Even though the September 11 incident did have a negative impact on the industry, we don't seem to have been adversely affected. To date, more than 400 exhibitors from 36 countries and regions have confirmed their participation in the ITE. National Tourist Organisations (NTO) from Australia and Jakarta are some of the new participants, while Oman rejoins the show this year," said Stanley Chu, Chairman of Adsale Exhibition Services Ltd., the ITE's organiser.

Some of the exhibitors had reserved booths during the ITE HK 2001 show. Organisations of India, Korea, Macao, the Philippines, Taiwan Province and Dubai, among others, are expanding their exhibit space for ITE HK 2002. Taiwan, for example, has booked over 100 square metres, doubling its booth size from that of last year.

Indeed, the industry is rebounding after several months of recession following the September 11 attacks. The World Travel Organisation (WTO) predicts that the tourism industry will return to its habitual rhythm of growth by the second half of 2002, as business travel resumes and consumer confidence is restored. Although overall international tourist arrivals registered a small drop from 697 million in 2000 to 689 million in 2001, the WTO will not alter its long-term plan for international travel. Compared with other regions, international arrivals in East Asia and the Pacific grew by an exceptional 4 percent in 2001. Among the better-performing destinations were China (6 percent up), Hong Kong (5 percent up), Malaysia (23 percent up) and Thailand (4 percent up).

This year's expo participants, exhibitors and buyers alike, have every opportunity to benefit from China's booming travel market. Meanwhile, thanks to the recently waived quota on people from the Chinese mainland travelling to Hong Kong, inbound travel of the HKSAR is set to increase noticeably. The policy has positively influenced Hong Kong tourism, as local travel agencies actively apply for licenses from the relevant authorities to receive these visitors.

The ITE HK is an effective medium for international exhibitors wanting to promote their global travel products to Asia-Pacific travel buyers. In total, the last expo drew 6,300 registered buyers and trade visitors, while 522 exhibitors from 45 countries and regions participated in ITE HK 2001.

Ongoing and extensive support from trade associations and authorities in Asia has also contributed to the favourable outlook. The show enjoys strong support from industry advocates, including the China National Tourism Administration, Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Tourism Board, Hong Kong Hotels Association, Macao Government Tourist Office, Guam Visitors Bureau, Japan National Tourist Organization, Korea National Tourism Organization, Singapore Tourism Board, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Tourism Malaysia, Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, PATA, AACVB and SITE-HK Chapters. Two home-based international airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways Limited and Hong Kong Dragon Airlines Limited, have also confirmed their roles as Sponsoring Airlines, and the Guangzhou-Kowloon Express Train has signed on as the Official Rail Service. The Renaissance Harbour View Hotel is the Official Hotel of ITE HK 2002, while the Panda Hotel will be the Sponsoring Hotel for the show.

For more information about ITE HK 2002, please contact Adsale Exhibition Services Ltd.
Tel: (852) 2811 8897; Fax (852) 2516 5024;
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MAY

April 28 — May 6

First Buddhism Culture Int'l Travel Festival Co-organised by the China World Ethnic Culture Exchange Promotion Organisation, Luoyang People's Government and Baima (White Horse) Monastery, this event will be held at the Baima Monastery in Luoyang, capital city of Henan Province. Baima Monastery was the first Buddhist temple established in China. The first Han-Chinese translated version of the "42-Chapter Sutra" was conceived here.

April 15-25

The Luoyang Peony Fair will be held from mid- to late April in Luoyang, capital city of Henan Province. Various rare peonies will be exhibited in Wangcheng Garden, Guose Peony Park, Luoyang Peony Park, Xiyuan Garden, and Peony Garden. The peony is regarded as a flower resembling wealth according to Chinese tradition.

April 30 — May 7

The First Liaozhai Festival *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, or *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, stands as one of the Four Great Fictional Works of Chinese literature. Written by Pu Songling (1640-1715), the book includes tales and love stories concerning ghosts, fox-spirits and man, reflecting the society in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Held in Pujiazhuang (the writer's hometown) in the Zibo District of Shandong Province, the fair will feature a cultural forum, book fair, stamp market, and local operas bringing the stories to live scenes. Tourists can also visit more than 30 scenic spots built based on the book like the Pu Songling Museum, Fox-spirit Garden, and Liaozhai Palace in Pujiazhuang.

May 2-4

The Chongqing Youyang Int'l Climbing Competition has invited representatives of the United States, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and China to participate in this year's event. With a theme of "Developing West China and Protecting Mother Nature", the races will be held in Gongtan ancient town in Youyang County in Chongqing, where a 400m high cliff can be found. Two routes chosen for the race are 60 metres high, with the greatest gradient of 120° and a degree of difficulty of 5-11, in accordance with international standards.

April 25 — May 28

The 7th Three Gorges Int'l Travel Festival will emphasise the charms of Chongqing and the Three Gorges. A total of 14 programmes such as a grand opening ceremony, floral parade, celebrations of the Miaos' Stepping Hill Fair, and the Wujiang River Cup climbing competition will be held. The festival will introduce the hinterland of the Three Gorges, the Wolong geological natural wonder. Visitors can also appreciate or buy different travel products during the event.

April 30 — May 8

Liucheng Jiangbei Water-town Travel Festival

This festival aims to promote Liucheng as the "Water-town of Jiangbei" (north of the Yangtse River) in Shandong Province. Liucheng has developed into an ecological, modern city with a unique history and culture. During the festival, there will be splendid cultural performances, a folk art exhibition and a series of water activities.

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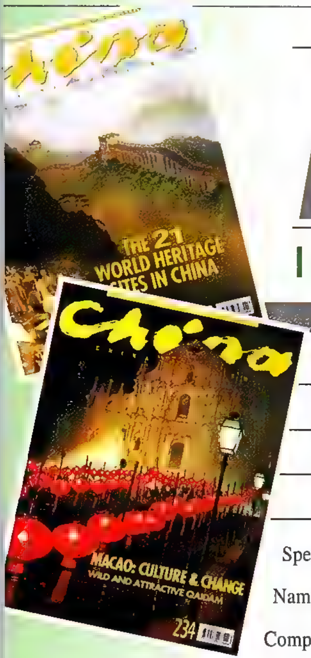
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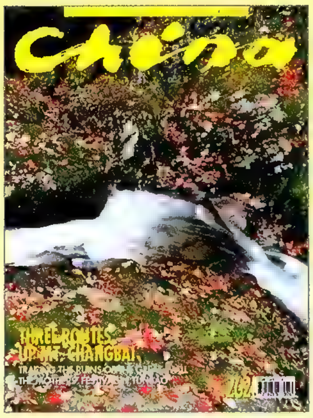

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Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

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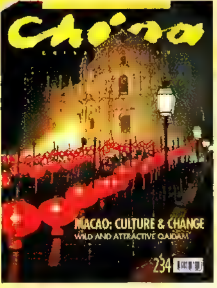
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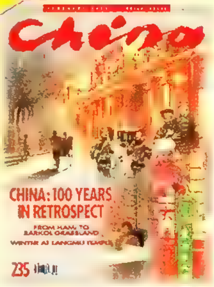
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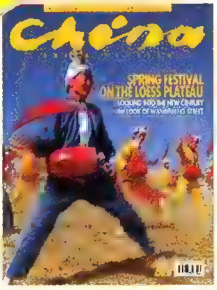
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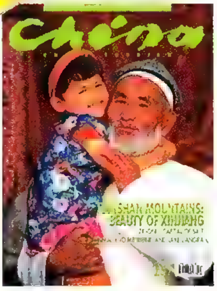
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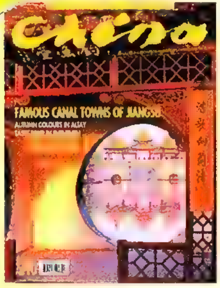
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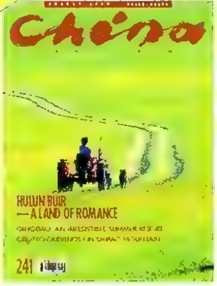
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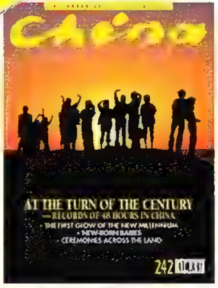
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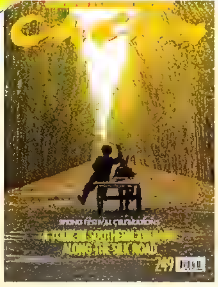
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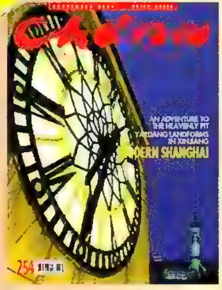
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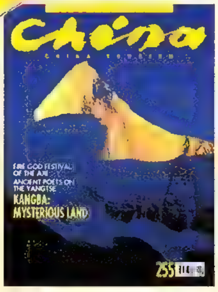
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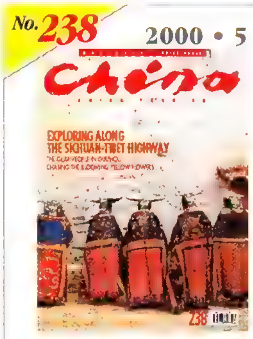

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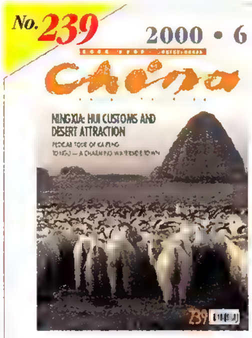

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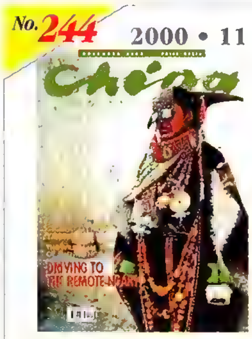

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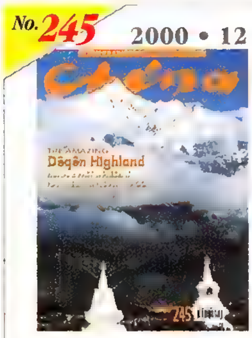

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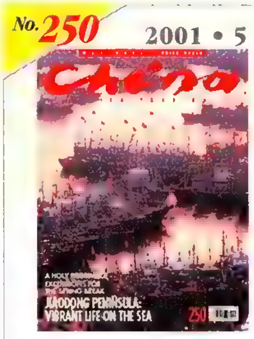

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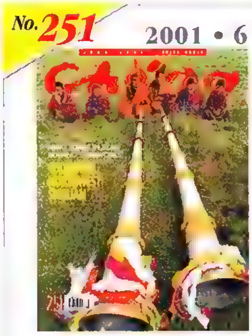

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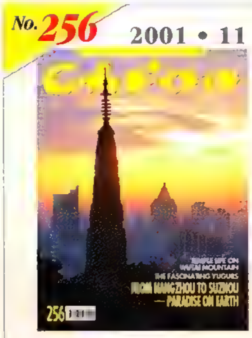

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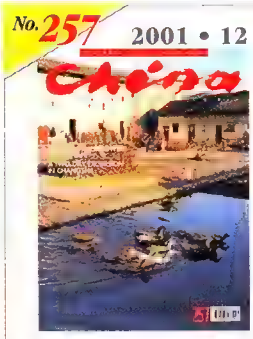

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Hotels in Jilin

City	Name	Star	Address	Tel	Fax
Changchun	Noble Hotel	*****	135 Renmin St, Changchun	(431) 5622888	(431) 5665522
	Shangri-la Hotel Changchun	*****	9 Xi'an Rd, Changchun	(431) 8981818	(431) 8981919
	Paradise Hotel	****	46 Renmin St, Changchun	(431) 2717071	(431) 2715709
	Changchun Overseas Chinese Hotel	***	1 Hubin Rd, Changchun	(431) 5688728	(431) 5686099
	Jilin Province Hotel	***	72 Stalin St, Changchun	(431) 8973071	(431) 8978835
	Chunyi Hotel	***	2 Renmin St, Changchun	(431) 2799966	(431) 8960171
	Nanhu Hotel	***	2 Nanhu Rd, Changchun	(431) 5683571	(431) 5682370
	Changbaishan Hotel	***	16 Xinmin St, Changchun	(431) 5669911	(431) 5642003
	Great Jixiang Hotel	***	80 Jiefang Rd, Changchun	(431) 5620111	(431) 5629101
	International Trade Hotel	***	61 Stalin St, Changchun	(431) 8940969	(431) 8945746
	Changhui Hotel	***	3 Chongqing Rd, Changchun	(431) 8935412	(431) 8935411
	Liyang Hotel	***	19 Jianshe St, Changchun	(431) 8525000	(431) 8540830
	Northeast Asia Hot Spring	***	3 Shenzhen St, Changchun	(431) 4944166	(431) 4944154
	Changchun Hotel	***	18 Xinhua Rd, Changchun	(431) 8929920	(431) 8922033
	Wenhua Hotel	**	80 Stalin St, Changchun	(431) 8911466	(431) 8911460
	Jiliang Mansion Jilin	**	7 Furong Rd, Changchun	(431) 2975991	(431) 2971194
	Tianhu Hotel Changchun	**	3 Hongqi St, Changchun	(431) 5674174	
Jilin	Wusong Hotel Jilin	****	29 Longtan St, Jilin City	(432) 3986200	(432) 3986501
	Yinhe Hotel Jilin	***	79 Songjiang Rd, Jilin City	(432) 4841780	(432) 4841621
	Jiangcheng Hotel	***	4 Jiangwan Rd, Jilin City	(432) 2457721	(432) 2458973
	Xiguan Hotel Jilin	***	155 Songjiang Rd W, Jilin City	(432) 4843141	(432) 4851245
Yanji	Yanbian Baishan Hotel	***	2 Youyi Rd, Yanji	(433) 2515958	(433) 2519493
	Yanbian Guest House Yanji	**	3 Youyi Rd, Yanji	(433) 2514627	(433) 2510252
	Yanbian Overseas Chinese Hotel Yanji	**	96 Guangminglu St, Yanji	(433) 2520415	(433) 2517457
	Dongbeiya Hotel	**	109 Changbai Rd, Henan St, Yanji	(433) 2820976	(433) 2820970
Longjing	Longjing Hotel	**	1 Yingbin Rd, Longjing	(433) 3223887	(433) 3227997
Hunchun	Hunchun Guest House	*	Chengbei Rd, Jinghe St, Hunchun	(440) 2513030	(440) 2519243

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Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing—Changchun	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0810	0945	CA1609
	1 4	0955	1125	SZ4605
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1025	1150	CJ6144
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1220	1350	CJ6146
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1530	1700	CJ6148
	1 5	1645	1810	CJ6346
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1645	1820	CJ6150
	2 4 6	1710	1840	XW145
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2010	2140	CJ6142
Changchun— Beijing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0800	0930	CJ6143
	1 5	0830	1000	CJ6345
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0940	1110	CJ6145
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1030	1205	CA1610
	1 4	1205	1340	SZ4606
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1300	1430	CJ6147
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1450	1615	CJ6149
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1800	1930	CJ6141
	2 4 6	1920	2055	XW 146
Chengdu—Changchun	1 4	0650	1125	SZ4605
	3 6	1705	2010	CJ6442
Changchun—Chengdu	3 6	0840	1235	CJ6441
	1 4	1205	1650	SZ4606
Hong Kong—Changchun	2	1400	1800	CJ 634
Changchun—Hong Kong	2	0830	1300	CJ 633
Seoul—Changchun	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1220	1310	CJ 688
	3 6	1835	1840	CJ 678
Changchun—Seoul	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0810	1050	CJ 687

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
	3 6	1420	1735	CJ 677
Shanghai (Pudong)—Changchun	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1200	1400	CJ6544
	3 5 7	1300	1520	CZ8765
	4 6	1345	1605	MF8607
	2 5	1415	1625	MF8613
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1730	2040	CJ6542
Changchun—Shanghai (Pudong)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0740	1100	CJ6543
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1410	1640	CJ6541
	3 5 7	1600	1825	CZ8766
	4 6	1650	1910	MF8608
	2 5	1705	1925	MF8614
Shenzhen—Changchun	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0920	1350	4G 857
	1 3 6	0935	1430	CZ3689
	2 5	1555	2020	CJ6356
	1 2 3 5 6	1555	2040	CJ6358
	4 7	1715	2110	CJ6354
Changchun—Shenzhen	4 7	0840	1235	CJ6353
	1 2 3 5 6	0925	1450	CJ6357
	2 5	0935	1450	CJ6355
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1440	1910	4G 858
	1 3 6	1520	2035	CZ3690
Vladivostok—Changchun	3 6	1640	1840	CJ 610
Changchun—Vladivostok	3 6	1300	1500	CJ 609
Yanji—Changchun	2 6	1640	2030	CJ6664
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2130	2210	CJ6642
Changchun—Yanji	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1510	1550	CJ6641
	2 6	1525	1600	SZ4671

Flights to and from Yanji

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing—Yanji	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1640	1835	CA1615
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1910	2050	CJ6152
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1920	2050	XW 105
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1950	2145	CA1617
	1 2 3 4 5	2220	2355	CJ6154
Yanji—Beijing	1 2 3 4 5	0800	1000	CJ6153
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1630	1810	CJ6151
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1920	2120	CA1616
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2135	2300	XW 106
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2235	0020	CA1618
Chaoyang—Yanji	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1200	1600	CJ6663
Yanji—Chaoyang	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1630	2030	CJ6664
Sanya—Yanji	1 4	0820	1520	CJ6757
Yanji—Sanya	1 4	1600	2300	CJ6758
Shanghai—Yanji	1 4	1300	1520	CJ6757
Yanji—Shanghai	1 4	1600	1830	CJ6758
Shenyang—Yanji	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0700	0800	CJ6605
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1420	1525	CJ6628
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1500	1600	CJ6663

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
	1 3 6	1720	1820	CJ6621
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1750	1850	CJ6601
	4 7	1810	1910	CJ6621
	2 5	1850	1950	CJ6621
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2010	2115	CJ6603
Yanji—Shenyang	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0620	0720	CJ6604
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0840	0930	CJ6606
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1210	1320	CJ6627
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1630	1730	CJ6664
	1 3 6	1900	2000	CJ6622
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1930	2030	CJ6602
	4 7	1950	2050	CJ6622
	2 5	2030	2130	CJ6622
Shenzhen—Yanji	1 4	1010	1520	CJ6757
Yanji—Shenzhen	1 4	1600	2110	CJ6758
Tianjin—Yanji	3 6	1625	1810	CA1631
Yanji—Tianjin	3 6	1850	2035	CA1632
Yantai—Yanji	2 6	1255	1600	SZ4671
Yanji—Yantai	2 6	1640	1915	SZ4672

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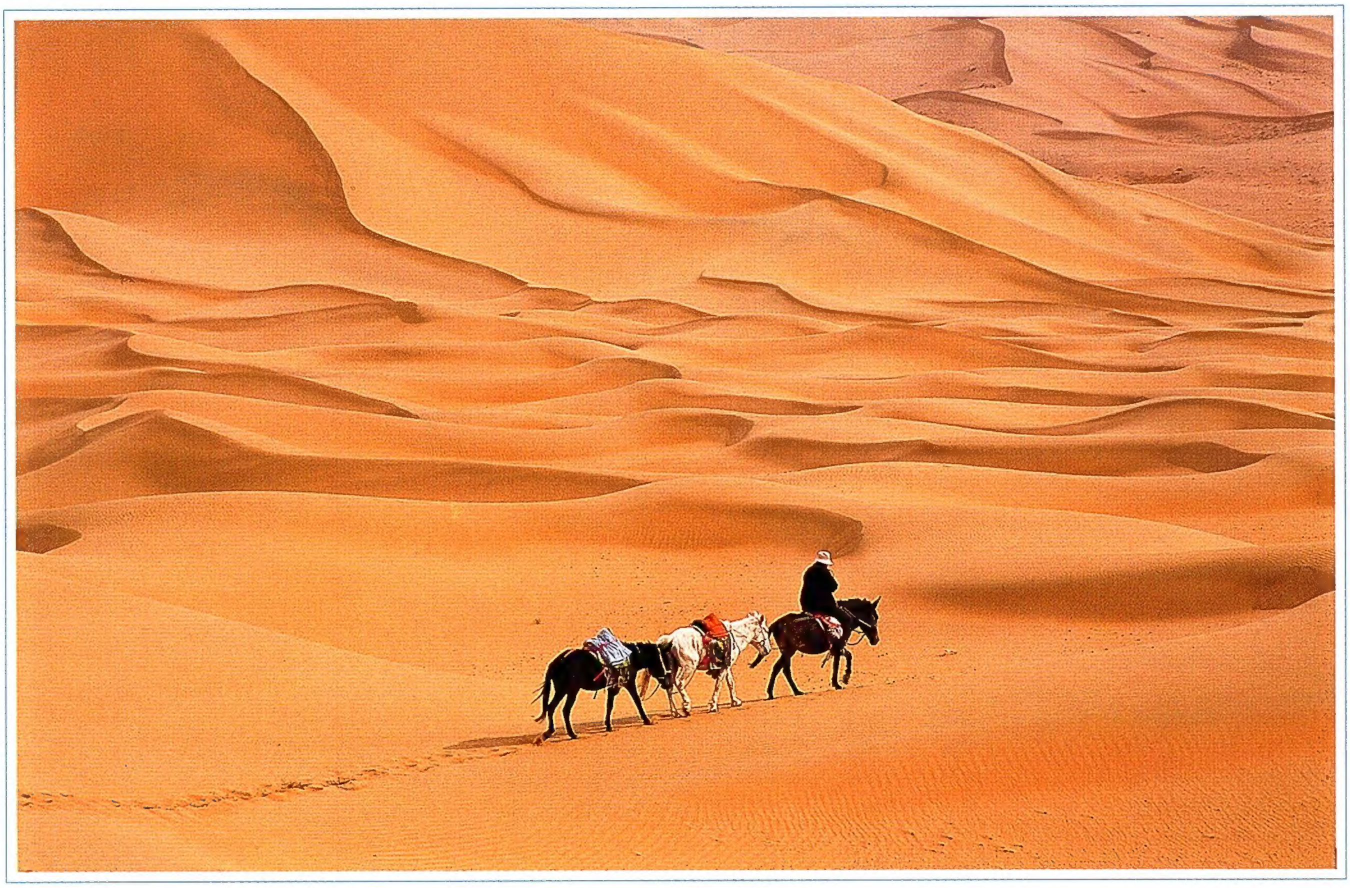
Highlights of Issue No. 263



- Though remote with only a small population, the **Alxa League** in western Inner Mongolia boasts lots of little-known, but spectacular sights. The highest sand dunes proudly stand in the Badain Jaran Desert stretching over 40, 000 sq km, while adventure tourist facilities have recently been developed in the neighbouring Tengger Desert. There is a forest which features strange rocks, and then there is the captivating Hongdun Mountain Canyon. Further away in distant Yajina, the golden ocean formed by the fallen leaves of the Wuyang, a diversiform-leafed poplar, has mesmerised hundreds of photographers over the years. Or, you may enjoy listening to the myths surrounding the mysterious Black City in Ejin Banner. The Alxa League offers you memorable experiences beyond all expectations. To learn more, see the Feature Story in Issue 263.

- **Caterpillar fungus** has long been regarded as one of the three most precious natural Chinese medicinal products, the other two being deer antler and ginseng. Today, at the foot of the snow-capped mountains on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, people from the area come to dig the grasslands looking for this money-making plant. However, they don't realise that they are actually destroying their own living environment. Gradually, their yaks and sheep can find no grasses to eat and desertification takes over. To read about this struggle between nature and humans, don't miss the next Nature segment.

- The **Flower Waist Dais** are a branch of the Dais, comprising one of the three major branches along with the Black Clothes Dais and White Clothes Dais. Upon entering the villages of the Flower Waist Dais, you can't help but notice the clothing of the Dai ladies: all of their hats, belts, dresses and other personal accessories are skilfully embroidered with attractive patterns. What may surprise you further is that some of these items have been crafted by the male Dais in a tradition which expresses their admiration for the ladies here. The Customs feature details their lifestyle in the upcoming issue.

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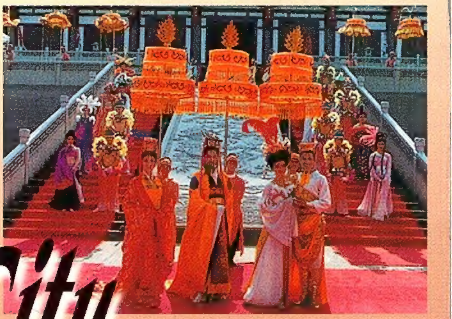

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